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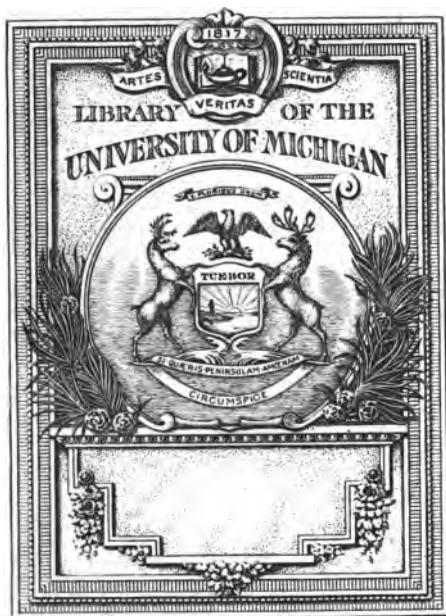
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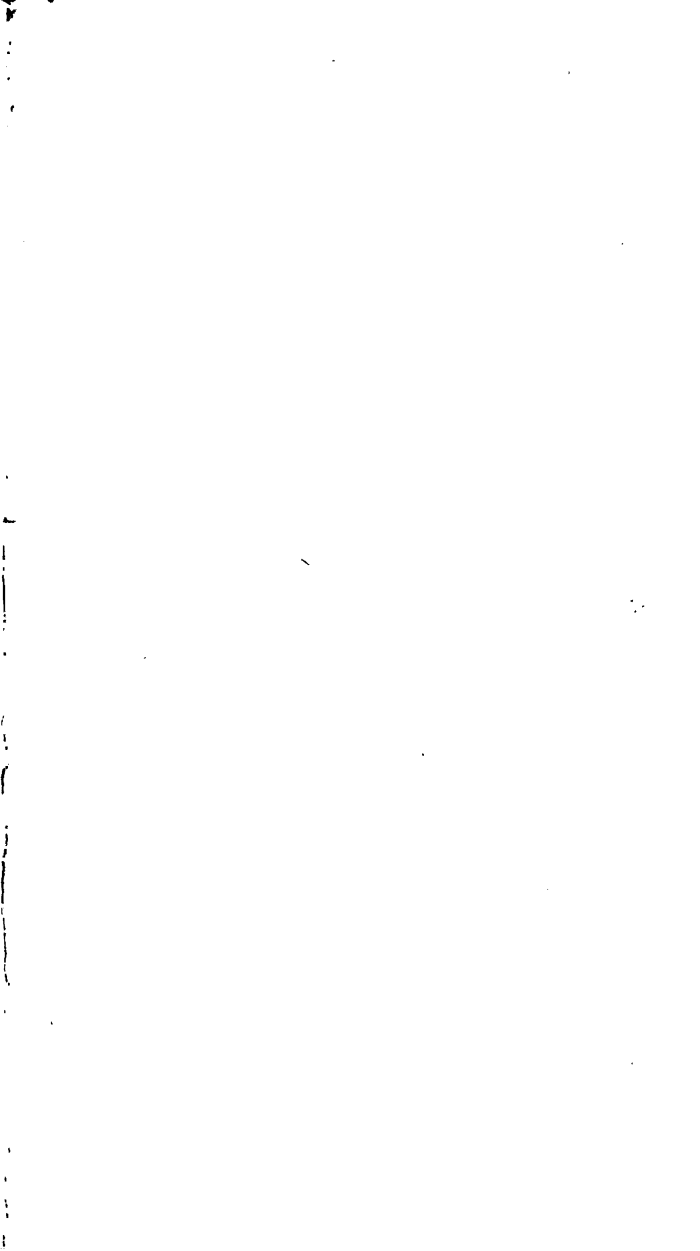
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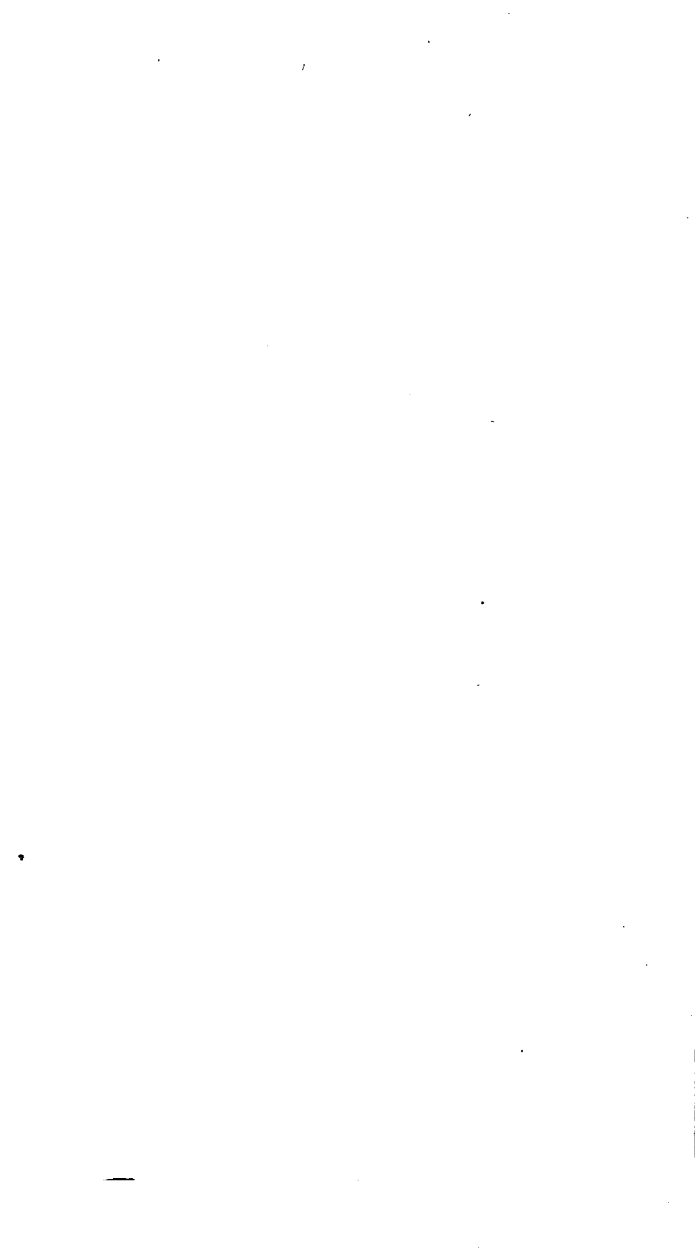
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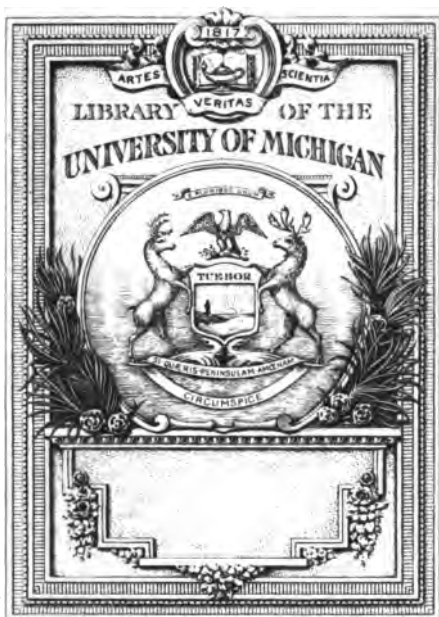




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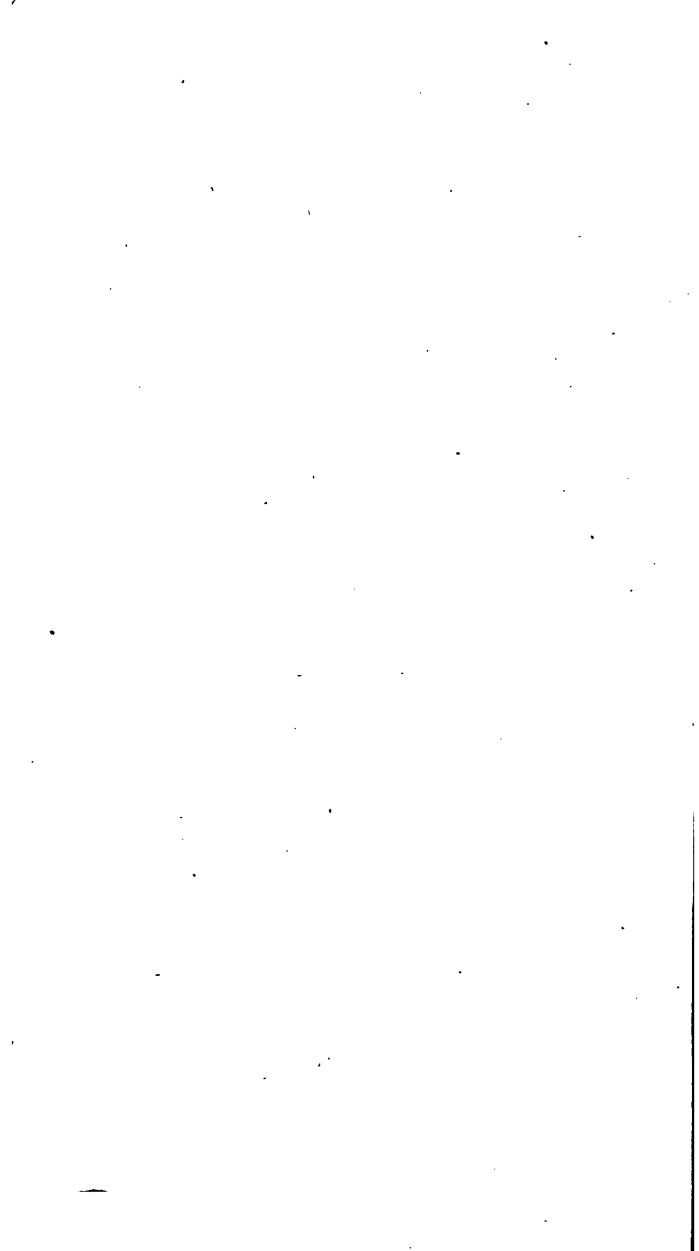
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T H E

COMIC THEATRE.

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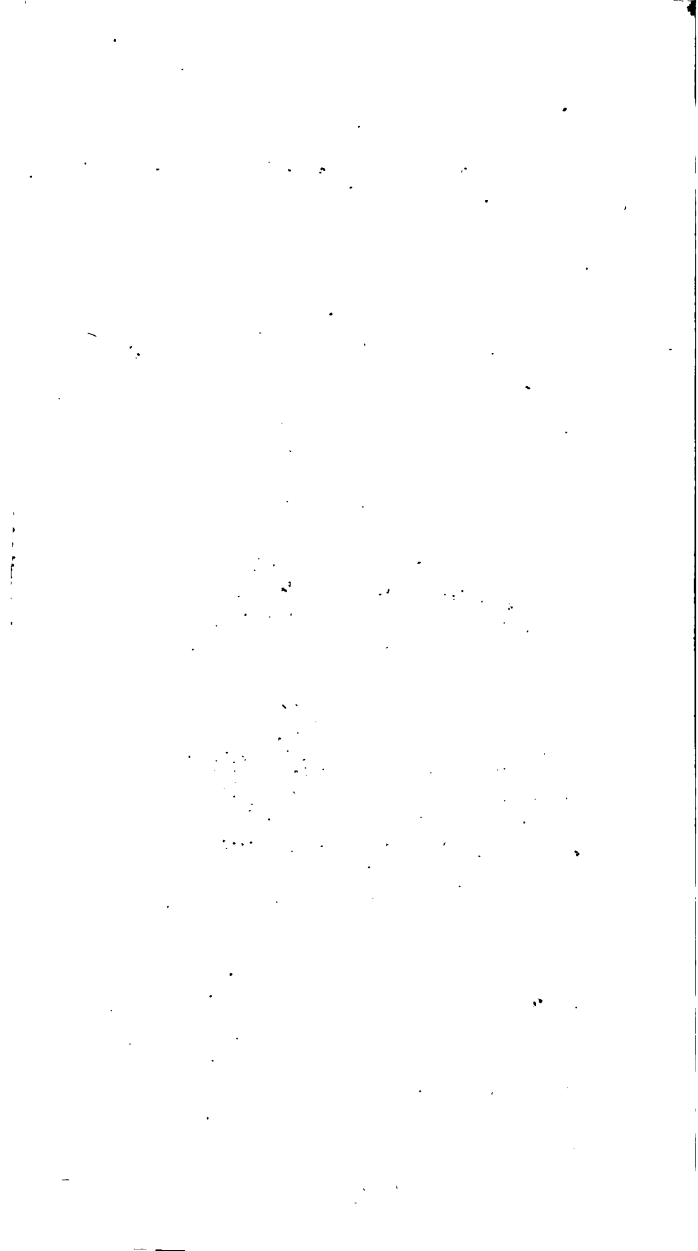


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THE
LEGACY,
OR, THE
FORTUNE-HUNTER.

VOL. III.

A

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MEANWELL.

The BARON.

COUNT SPANGLE.

The MARQUIS of Elbagnac.

BELLMOUR.

TOM.

A Footman.

HARRIET.

LETTICE.

T H E
L E G A C Y.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Enter MEANWELL *and* LETTICE.

L E T T I C E.

AND so, fir, here we are fix'd in the country for good and all.

M E A N W E L L.

Even so, Lettice.

L E T T I C E.

But, methinks, you ought to have some companion in your retirement; otherwise it may chance to sit heavy upon you.

M E A N W E L L.

Thank heav'n I am a widower, and such intend to remain.

4 The LEGACY; Or,

LETTICE.

Well, I am surpris'd at that; for I've been told that your lady was the most amiable sweet-temper'd woman breathing, and that you were thought the happiest couple in the world.

MEANWELL.

Pr'ythee, who told you all this?

LETTICE.

A thousand different people.

MEANWELL.

Appearances are too often fallacious, Lettice: but, pray, what would you infer from the suppos'd happiness I enjoy'd in the marry'd state?

LETTICE.

Why, that it is very extraordinary, considering how well you succeeded upon the first trial, that you should not be tempted to make a second; especially as your time of life is such as might very well warrant the experiment. You are not much above forty, I believe?

MEANWELL.

No matter, Lettice; I have something else to think of. The father of a family has a thousand cares to employ his attention. I must think of disposing of my daughter, who, to say the truth, begins to be a heavy burthen upon my hands.

LETTICE.

And there's your son too.

MEANWELL.

Oh! a son can shift for himself: besides, mine, you know, follows the fashionable taste of the times—But my daughter is now turn'd of sixteen.

LETTICE.

A ticklish age, that's certain.

MEAN-

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 5

MEANWELL.

And very perplexing to me, Lettice; for I want to have her settled; and at the same time know I have little or no fortune to give her.

LETTICE.

Lack a day, sir! miss Harriet is a fortune of herself. So genteel, handsome, agreeable and witty a young lady, can never be in want of suitors.

MEANWELL.

Psha! psha! wit and beauty are nothing without money. The first question asked now-a-days is, what can you give her? and what answer can I make? It is this that distracts me. I might, doubtless, impose upon the world, but——

LETTICE.

But!——Lord, sir, it is the duty of every parent to dispose of his daughter to the best advantage.

MEANWELL.

I have some prospect of marrying her into a rich and noble family in our neighbourhood here; but then, the circumstance of a fortune will, I am afraid, overturn every thing. The father supposed me rich, as many others do, but I very fairly undeceiv'd him in that particular.

LETTICE.

And then he was off, I suppose?

MEANWELL.

Not so; for he is to send his son to pay a visit to Harriet this very day.

LETTICE.

Pray, what is his name?

6 The L E G A C Y ; Or,

M E A N W E L L.

His name is——but hush! I think I hear
somebody coming; see who it is.

L E T T I C E.

It is only mr. Thomas, your son's man.

S C E N E II.

*Enter TOM, [booted and spurred, with a whip
in his hand.]*

M E A N W E L L.

Well, Tom, what brings you here so early this
morning?

T O M.

I am come post, sir, to deliver you a letter from
my master, which, he says, is of great consequence.

M E A N W E L L.

Give it me.

T O M. *[Feeling in his pockets.]*

Yes, sir——here it is——no faith, this is not it
——nor this——Zounds! I believe I have lost it.

M E A N W E L L.

You careless scoundrel!

T O M.

What the devil can I have done with it? I have
such a heap of papers in my pocket! It must cer-
tainly be amongst them——No! by all that's
good, I believe I have dropt it by the way, or left
it behind me.

M E A N W E L L.

Was ever such a heedless rascal!

T O M.

Lord, sir, I set out two hours before day-light,
and my eyes were hardly open: I slept half the
way, and no wonder, faith! for——

M E A N -

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 7

MEANWELL.

'Sdeath ! you prating puppy, am I to be put off with these idle excuses ?

T O M.

If you will but have a little patience, sir, I believe I shall find it at last : yes, faith, here it is.

[Giving him a letter.]

MEANWELL.

Let me see it——Why——this is not directed in my son's hand.

T O M.

No ?

MEANWELL.

No ! How came you by this letter ? Who had it you from ?

T O M.

Why, from a man I overtook on the road, who accosted me very civilly, and begged I would do him the favour to stop a little. For, says he, in a melancholly tone, I am so weary, my good sir, for you must know he was on foot, I am so weary, says he, and you seem so well mounted, and make such dispatch, that I should be much obliged to you if you would give this letter to Mr. Meanwell, as soon as you get to his house ; for I am ashamed to appear before him myself, in the condition I am now in, so badly clothed, and half-dead with fatigue.

MEANWELL.

But who is this man ?

T O M.

His letter will acquaint you, I suppose.

MEANWELL, *[Opening the letter.]*

Will it so ? Well, let us see what his name is, and what he has to say to me ? He is some sharper, or impudent beggar, I suppose.

A. 4.

T O M.

3 The L E G A C Y; Or,

T O M.

Upon my word, sir, he has an appearance above the vulgar stamp.

M E A N W E L L. [*Reads.*]

“ I am just come from the West-Indies, whither
“ I lately made a voyage, in hopes of finding my
“ parents, and an handsome fortune : but, at my
“ arrival, found they were both deceas’d, without
“ leaving me any thing : and, to add to my mis-
“ fortune, I am informed, since my return, that
“ my dear aunt is likewise dead; so that I am
“ plunged into the most dreadful difficulties : and
“ fortune, who has been ever constant in persecut-
“ ing me, seems to have preserved me from the
“ dangers of the sea, only to make me end my
“ life in misery and want on shore.”

L E T T I C E.

Lord, sir, who is this melancholy letter from ?

M E A N W E L L.

One whom misfortune seems to take a delight in tormenting——But tell me, Tom, will the person who gave you this be here soon ?

T O M.

Within half an hour at farthest, I dare say, sir.

M E A N W E L L.

Will he so ? I am glad of it.

T O M.

That is to say, if he does not stick by the way in a damn’d bog that I thought would have bury’d me and my horse.

M E A N W E L L.

But now, mr. Blunderbuss, about this letter of my son’s that you have lost ?

T O M.

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 9

T O M.

Why, fir, I must e'en post back again for it, if——But, here it is, after all! I remember now, I cramm'd it into my bosom——I am glad I have found it, however. Here it is, fir—

M E A N W E L L.

This is it, I see, by the superscription. Now for the contents; [*reading to himself.*] Hum—hum—hum—Odd enough! My son here tells me I may expect a visit from a high original, called the marquis of Esbagnac, a fiery, petulant Gascoon, and a person of great consequence in the province of Armagnac, where he resides. It seems he is over head and ears in love with my daughter, and is coming to ask her of me in marriage.

T O M.

It is very true, fir.

M E A N W E L L.

How do you know, pray, fir?

T O M.

My master has told me the whole affair; and the Gascoon too, finding me a lad of good parts, (which, I hope, you will allow, shews him to have some discernment) acquainted me with the occasion of his visit; and I can tell you that you may expect him here every minute.

M E A N W E L L.

But has he ever seen my daughter?

T O M.

He! never in his life.

M E A N W E L L.

Why then, how the devil came he so violently in love with her?

T O M.

From her picture.

A 5

M E A N

10 THE LEGACY; Or,

MEANWELL.

Her picture? I don't believe that she ever sat for it.

T O M.

Lord, sir, my master gave so warm and lively a description of her to his lordship, that he took fire immediately.

MEANWELL.

Pr'ythee, truce with thy metaphors, and come to plain speaking.

T O M.

Why, then, sir, over and above the personal charms of the young lady, your daughter, I find that his lordship has been informed she has a very large fortune depending upon you. This has so increased his passion, that he has left nothing undone, by presents and promises, since the affair has been first brought upon the carpet, to engage me to speak a good word for him.

LETTICE.

A true fortune-hunter, my life for him.

MEANWELL.

If that is all his view——

T O M. [*Going.*]

I'll beg leave, sir——

MEANWELL.

Ay, ay; go and take a glass to refresh thee.

T O M.

A couple would do me no hurt, sir.

MEANWELL.

I believe not; nor a couple to that.

T O M.

Why, no faith. I never ride so well as when I have taken a whet.

MEAN-

THE FORTUNE-HUNTER. 11

MEANWELL.

You are going back again, then, are you?

TOM.

Yes, sir; my master ordered me to return as soon as ever I had delivered my message.

MEANWELL.

Well, well: but while you are taking a little refreshment, I'll go and write an answer to his letter. Follow me.

[*Exeunt Meanwell and Tom.*]

SCENE III.

LETTICE, [*Sola.*]

What the deuce can be the meaning of this same dismal letter my master read to us just now? He seem'd to make a mystery of it, which I wonder at, as he always used to communicate every thing to me.

SCENE IV.

Enter HARRIET.

HARRIET.

Ah, my dear Lettice; I am glad I have found thee!

LETTICE.

Did you want me then?

HARRIET.

I did—and I did not.

LETTICE.

But what, in the name of wonder, makes you up and dress so soon this morning?

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

Why, I heard my brother's man's voice as he came into the court-yard.

LETTICE.

Well! and what of that?

HARRIET.

And I die to know what brought him here.

LETTICE.

You might have saved yourself the trouble; I was just coming to inform you.

HARRIET.

I cannot conceive what he is come in such a violent hurry about. There is certainly something more than ordinary in the wind. Tell me, my good girl, what is it?

LETTICE.

Something that will not displease you.

HARRIET.

Indeed!

LETTICE.

Indeed.

HARRIET.

Oh let me have it then this instant!

LETTICE.

Well then, here is a husband coming for you; does that please you?

HARRIET. [*Coolly.*]

As it may happen.

LETTICE.

As it may happen?

HARRIET.

Ay; but who is he, Lettice?

LETTICE

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 13

LETTICE.

Oh! his name will be enough, it is a mighty pompous one; it ends with gnac.

HARRIET.

For heaven's sake what can this name be?

LETTICE.

The marquis of Esbagnac, of the province of Armagnac.

HARRIET.

Mercy on us! Esbagnac of Armagnac!

LETTICE.

The name seems to frighten you; but let me tell you the title of marchioness is no despicable thing.

HARRIET.

Heaven defend us! if he would make me a duchess I would have nothing to say to him. Esbagnac! my God! what a name! sure my father can never think of making me take so ridiculous a title? I cannot pronounce it without shuddering.

LETTICE.

And yet he is a great personage in the province of Armagnac. And don't you think it much better to be my lady marchioness Esbagnac, than plain mrs. such a one.

HARRIET.

You know I am naturally headstrong, Lettice; and I declare to thee, I would rather die an old maid than take that filthy name.—Lord! could I ever be brought to say, yes, think you, to Esbagnac?

LETTICE.

And do you think, let me ask you, that the sound of a name is of any consequence when one's interest is concerned? No, no; I should be glad to see

see the name I would refuse, how'er harsh or disagreeable, if it brought a title and a good estate with it. Besides, if the marquis of Esbagnac is a handsome, well-made agreeable young fellow, and can please you in other respects, you'll soon get rid of your dislike to his name.

H A R R I E T.

Never tell me ! if he was as handsome as Adonis, or as ugly as a Satyr, it would be all one to me ; my resolution's fixed.

L E T T I C E.

May I die but you have an amazing spirit for your age miss. I always thought that young women were to be governed by their parents in these matters.

H A R R I E T.

To be sure, when they can.

L E T T I C E.

Then how comes it you are so refractory ? Come, will you make me your confident ?

H A R R I E T.

You'll betray me.

L E T T I C E.

As I hope to be married, and I do not know a more solemn oath a single young woman can bind herself by, I never will discover a syllable of what you tell me.

H A R R I E T. [*Sighing.*]

Ah Lettice !

L E T T I C E.

A sigh too ! this leads to something. Come, out with it :—unbosom yourself of a secret that I have observed to lie heavy at that little heart of your's these six months ; and moreover, depend upon it, you are safe with me.

H A R R I E T.

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 15

HARRIET.

It is a very serious affair, I'll assure you.

LETTICE.

Your eyes tell me as much.

HARRIET.

My eyes!

LETTICE.

Yes, your eyes; for they have a certain melting softness, that speaks more than they would willingly have known. Am I wrong think you?

HARRIET. [*Sighing.*]

Alas! no.

LETTICE.

Well said—I may presume then you are in love.

HARRIET.

Thou hast guess'd it.

LETTICE.

Bravo! and deeply.

HARRIET.

Over head and ears!

LETTICE.

So much the better. Wish a charming young fellow I make no doubt!

HARRIET.

The most agreeable of his sex.

LETTICE.

I thought as much.

HARRIET.

Tall, well made, scuffable, witty——

LETTICE.

LETTICE.

In a word the most accomplished of mankind. I knew it, I knew it.—Well, and does he love you in return?

HARRIET.

Love me! he dies for me!

LETTICE.

And what says your father to all this?

HARRIET.

Oh! he knows nothing of the matter.

LETTICE.

Are you sure of that?

HARRIET.

Very sure; at least we have done all in our power to conceal it from him.

LETTICE.

May be so; but people in love are very apt to be off their guard; and notwithstanding the modesty of our sex, the heart will sometimes declare itself:—tell me, have you never suffered your eyes to betray you? have no stolen glances——

HARRIET.

To prevent an accident of that kind, I have always taken care to turn another way whenever my lover has spoke to me before company; and put on an air of indifference when my heart was ready to leap to my lips.

LETTICE.

So young, and so artful!

HARRIET.

Do you think I have my lesson to learn at this time of day?

LETTICE.

But I wonder that your father, who watches you so narrowly, has never observed this.

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

I have made it my business to blind him; and I'll answer for it he never once suspected my having an inclination for any man living.

LETTICE.

I know it is what he labours of all things to prevent; but egad I find you have been beforehand with him.

HARRIET.

You'll be surpriz'd, perhaps, when I tell you that I knew what it was to love almost from my infancy.

LETTICE.

"You suck'd the dangerous poison with your milk," as the poet says.

HARRIET.

Love was the first passion of my soul; but it has always been restrained by prudence.

LETTICE.

Oh lord! to be sure. But methinks this same lover of yours has been absent a long while; for—

HARRIET.

We have been absent much alike.

LETTICE.

He's upon the spot then.

HARRIET.

No, not quite so near.

LETTICE.

And do you love him still?

HARRIET.

Every day more and more.

LETTICE.

A girl of sixteen, and so constant; you are a perfect prodigy!

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

I love him so well, that if I have not him I'll die an old maid.

LETTICE.

Good lord! miss, make no rash vows! but pray, what may be the name of this beloved shepherd?

HARRIET.

Thou shalt know all at a proper time, Lettice.

LETTICE.

Why you amaze me! so much discretion and reserve, with such a stock of tenderness and constancy at your years can never last long; no, no, you'll become a true woman by and by, and be as fickle and inconstant as the veriest she of us all.

HARRIET.

Time will shew whether I am the giddy creature you take me for.

S C E N E V.

Enter MEANWELL hastily.

MEANWELL.

What are you two discoursing about so earnestly?

LETTICE.

Of the ridiculous customs of the times, sir.

MEANWELL.

Which, I hope, my Harriet will make it her business to avoid.

HARRIET.

It shall be my chief study so to do, sir.

MEANWELL.

That's my good girl.

LETTICE.

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 19

LETTICE.

Yes, sir, you may trust to my young lady's prudence; she is about to give you a convincing proof of it.

MEANWELL.

How do you mean? Well, what is your business?

S C E N E VI.

Enter a SERVANT.

SERVANT.

Sir, here is the marquis of Elbagnac come to wait on you.

MEANWELL.

Shew him in, Lettice; leave us. Daughter do you stay here.

HARRIET.

Lord, sir! what business have I with the gentleman?

MEANWELL.

No business at all, only to be present and hold your tongue.

S C E N E VII.

Enter the marquis of Elbagnac, who runs to MEANWELL, and catches him in his arms.

MARQUIS.

Ha! my worthy friend, I am rejoiced to see you, upon my soul! let me embrace you. I hope you are well.

MEANWELL. [*With a distant air.*]

Much at your service, my lord.

MARQUIS.

MARQUIS.

By my faith I am very glad of it. T'other hug, my dear [*bugging and squeezing Meanwell, who endeavours to get loose from him.*]

MEANWELL.

Sir! My lord! for heaven's sake! oh!

MARQUIS.

This is the way that we make acquaintance in my province; which is, let me tell you, the only spot in the globe for ease and politeness; we are quite sans façon, all free and easy as you see.

MEANWELL.

A little too much so, I think. Lord what a sweat he has put me into! [*Wiping his face.*]

MARQUIS.

So now, do you see we are sworn friends for life.

MEANWELL.

May be so—but methinks you are rather too precipitate in your connections.

MARQUIS.

Not in the least, my dear, not in the least; the air of our country inspires us with an happy familiarity that overleaps all ceremony. In friendship and love we take fire at once.

MEANWELL.

Now we are not quite so hasty at Paris.

MARQUIS.

No? so much the worse.—Upon my soul you seem to have a pretty little box here; very commodious, and quite rural.

MEANWELL.

Both house and owner are at your ladyship's service.

MARQUIS

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 21

MARQUIS.

I'll take you at your word ; I like the situation mightily, and should be pleased to spend a summer or so—

MEANWELL.

I wish it was more worthy of entertaining such a guest.

MARQUIS.

You have a fine girl of a daughter too, I find, if the description her brother has given me of her is just.

MEANWELL. [*Pointing to Harriet.*]

Your lordship may judge for yourself.

MARQUIS.

Hum ! is that the original ?

MEANWELL.

The very same, such as she is.

MARQUIS. [*Surveying her.*]

Why—really—she is passable. It is not impossible but we may like each other.

HARRIET. [*Aside to Meanwell.*]

This marquis is a great fool, or I am much mistaken.

MARQUIS.

Well, miss, you see before you as clever a young fellow, tho' I say it, as ever stept under a coronet ; and upon my soul I think there is something agreeable enough about yourself, a pretty roguish eye ;—a smart shape—a—curse on me mr. Whatdycallum, if I don't think your daughter and I were made for each other. [*To Harriet.*] You blush, child ! well I declare this little confusion becomes you admirably ; besides, I am vastly fond of modesty, it is a scarce qualification now-a-days ; so that, my chicken, the more abash'd you seem at the ardour of my passion,

sion, the more you will fan the flames of my desires.
[To Meanwell.] Does this pretty miss talk yet?

MEANWELL.

Yes, yes, my lord; she can talk upon occasion.

MARQUIS.

I am very glad of it, for I did not know but she might have been born dumb, as I have not heard her open her lips yet.

MEANWELL.

You'll find she has the use of her tongue at a proper time.

MARQUIS.

Oh! just when she pleases; I am in no kind of haste about it. Your women who talk little are generally very virtuous; and that's what I like. [To Harriet.] Will you be so kind, my dear, to take a turn or two about the room?

HARRIET. [*Angrily.*]

For what purpose, pray?

MARQUIS.

Why, cannot you guess? as I like your face tolerably well, child, I am willing to see if you tread well; have a genteel air; and that pretty jaunty step which gives an ease and grace to the whole body.

HARRIET.

Well, then, you shall have a specimen.

[*She walks a turn or two about the stage hastily, the marquis surveying her all the time, and then runs out, pulling the door after her.*]

S C E N E VIII.

MARQUIS.

Sprightly! very sprightly indeed—moves with life—and gracefully enough.—What the devil! she's gone.

gone. Oh! prythee call her back; I have not half examined her yet.

MEANWELL.

'Sdeath! fir! you talk as if you was bargaining for a Horse.

MARQUIS.

Why do you suppose I'll buy a pig in a poke, old gentleman?

MEANWELL.

No, fir; neither did I expect myself or my daughter to be treated in this manner. To the point, if you please, and lay aside all these fooleries.

MARQUIS.

Fooleries! hark'ye, old rustick, none of your snarling; I would have you know that I say nothing but what is worthy of being noticed.

MEANWELL.

And I do notice it, you see.

MARQUIS.

You do well upon my soul!

MEANWELL. [*Aside.*]

My son was quite in the right: this is an original indeed.—Pray, my lord, how long have you left the country?

MARQUIS.

About a month or so. I am a little prince in my own country, my dear; and so am accustomed to a certain freedom of speaking and acting unknown to the vulgar.

MEANWELL.

You are pretty free, indeed.

MARQUIS.

Oh! not in the least too much: I always take my own way let who will dislike it. If I was in the presence itself, I should expect the same deference
to

to be paid me as here ; or let those look to it who were wanting.

MEANWELL.

Why, what would you do ?

MARQUIS.

Death and wounds ! do ? why I would quit the place directly and return home. I would punish the whole court by withdrawing from it : but, however, I am willing in the first place to conclude the alliance with your family, for which I am purposely come to Paris.

MEANWELL.

I should imagine, my lord, that a person of your rank and consequence might find an alliance more worthy of you in your own country.

MARQUIS.

Upon my soul you talk like a sensible man mr. Meanwell. To be sure, my dear ; I have some of the most antient and noble families in the province of Armagnac at my call ; but the devil of it is, they are in general plaguy poor : now you know, what is a name without money ? I am for gracing a noble title and pedigree, with a fortune capable of supporting it in its proper lustre ; but not finding that very easy to come at in my own neighbourhood, why I e'en took a trip to Paris, in hopes of succeeding better. No bad scheme you'll say.

MEANWELL.

Why, troth my lord, if your visit to me was on that score, I am sorry to say your lordship will find yourself furiously disappointed ; for I can very truly assure you that no one in this house has any pretensions to a fortune. A bam, a mere bam !

MARQUIS.

MARQUIS.

Don't I know that you can give the little tit I saw here just now, thirty thousand good sterling pounds down on the nail; and upon my conscience, now, that will satisfy me very well, for I am not greedy at all. And so, without any more to do, give me your hand, and let it be a bargain: for what may come hereafter, I'll trust to your honour.

MEANWELL.

You are extremely condescending; but I must once again declare to your lordship, that my daughter, Harriet, has not a penny of fortune.

MARQUIS. [*Slapping him on the shoulder.*]

Come, come, old Squeezepenny, none of your tricks upon travellers. I know what I know.

MEANWELL.

And what is that pray?

MARQUIS.

The legacy, my dear! oh ho, do you blush? D'Orcy is dead, my jewel; he is by my soul! you may not know, perhaps, that he was my uncle. No matter! he told me on his death-bed, d'ye see, that he was well informed his late wife had, a little before her death, deposited a large sum of money, which she had laid by for herself and her relations, in your hands, as a person in whom she placed great confidence; now, as nephew to my deceased uncle, I am come to demand the restitution of these family savings; and in consideration of the trouble you have had in taking charge of this money so long, I am willing to take your daughter off your hands. What say you to this now?

MEANWELL.

And was this what brought you hither?

M A R Q U I S.

To be sure, my dear; and as being sole heir and executor to my uncle D'Orcy.

M E A N W E L L.

If so, I must deal freely with your lordship; and tell you, that admitting such a sum as you mention to have been committed to my charge, none of the family of the Esbagnacs can have any pretensions to it. Your uncle, you know, had no fortune of his own when he marry'd his late wife; and as he died without children, had she survived him, she would have had an undoubted right to dispose of her's as she saw proper. Now, her brother had two sons, the younger of whom is still living; and to him this money, if there is any, properly belongs, and to no other person.

M A R Q U I S.

I deny that.

M E A N W E L L.

'You deny it! on what foundation?

M A R Q U I S.

I deny it, that's enough.

M E A N W E L L.

Indeed!

M A R Q U I S.

Indeed, and so e'en wave your trifling objections.

M E A N W E L L.

Hey day! do you think to frighten me with this vapouring?

M A R Q U I S.

Vapouring! death and wounds do you know who you are speaking to? Oh! by the great God I am too patient. But come, to make short of the matter,

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ter, I'll relinquish my claim to your daughter, if you'll give me the money that belongs to me.

MEANWELL.

Neither the one nor the other.

MARQUIS.

How! neither the one nor the other?

MEANWELL.

I have said it.

MARQUIS.

Nay, then my jewel, look to yourself.

MEANWELL.

I am not to be terrified by empty menaces.

MARQUIS.

'Sdeath! I can hold no longer; I am all in a flame.

MEANWELL.

Then walk forth and cool yourself.

MARQUIS.

By my father's soul, my little master Meanwell, you are not very bashful, to talk of sending me away without settling accounts.

MEANWELL.

They are already settled.

MARQUIS.

And I am to have——

MEANWELL.

Nothing.

MARQUIS.

May be so: but if I stir from hence till I have made you refund this same legacy, may I be the veriest peasant that ever hid his head in a hut. So give me satisfaction this instant, or by——

S C E N E IX.

*Enter TOM.*T O M. [*To Meanwell.*]

Sir, I am going to set out; have you any commands to send by me to my master?

M E A N W E L L.

Yes, you may tell him I shall never forgive him for having recommended me such a fool for a son-in-law.

M A R Q U I S. [*Clapping his hand to his sword.*]

Damnation! do you mean to affront me, sir? Draw——

M E A N W E L L. [*In a passion.*]

Tom, run immediately and bring me my sword.

T O M.

Lord, sir, there's no occasion for it; here's a pretty little gentleman in my hand, ready to execute any commands of yours [*Looking at the Marquis, and shaking his stick.*]

M A R Q U I S.

Thunder and ounds! you impudent scoundrel.

T O M.

Scoundrel! that's not my name, sir; I have the honour to be called Tom Blunt, and none of the Blunts were ever scoundrels; downright honest fellows, if you please, who love to speak their minds, and have a natural aversion to bullies and cowards.

M E A N W E L L. [*Smiling.*]

Go, go, Tom, about your business.

T O M.

T O M.

I obey, sir;—but if I was in another place, I know what I know——[*Exit, elbowing the Marquis, and shaking his stick.*]

S C E N E X.

Enter B E L L M O U R.

[*Drest in an old black coat, Meanwell seeing him, runs and catches him in his arms.*]

M E A N W E L L.

Bellmour, my dear Bellmour! is it you?

B E L L M O U R.

I hope you will pardon me, sir, for appearing before you in this wretched plight; but my impatience to pay my respects to you, would not permit me to stand upon form: and——

M E A N W E L L. [*Embracing him.*]

Once more let me bid thee welcome.

B E L L M O U R.

This generous reception gives me new life.

M E A N W E L L.

And the sight of you——

B E L L M O U R.

But if I am not mistaken, sir, I found this gentleman and you at high words when I came in, What was the matter pray?

M E A N W E L L.

Oh, nothing; only this noble and courageous lord thought proper to insult me in my own house.

B E L L M O U R. [*Going up to the Marquis.*]

How, sir! have you dared——

B 3.

MARQUIS.

M A R Q U I S. [*Fiercely.*]

Zounds ! fellow, do you know who you are speaking to ? If I did not think you out of your senses, I would soon teach you to mend your manners.

B E L L M O U R.

Indeed ! well, that must be put to the trial. But may I not know the reason for your making this disturbance in my friend's house ?

M A R Q U I S. [*Raising his voice.*]

Death and furies, man ! he has the impudence to keep my estate from me whether I will or no.

B E L L M O U R.

Lower your note a little if you please, sir.

M A R Q U I S. [*Louder.*]

Blood and fire ! are you to direct me how I am to speak ?

B E L L M O U R.

It may happen so.

M A R Q U I S.

He shall either give me satisfaction, or I'll make day-light shine thro' him.

B E L L M O U R.

Without troubling myself to enquire into the particulars of this affair, I take upon me to aver, that this gentleman is a person of too strict honour to injure any one ; and whoever says to the contrary is a rascal.

M A R Q U I S. [*Putting himself in a fighting posture.*]

Oh ! by Jesus, my fury is up.

B E L L M O U R. [*Doing the same.*]

Give it full scope then.

M A R Q U I S.

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MARQUIS.

By heavens if I do, annihilation will be thy portion ;—so look to it.

BELLMOUR. [*Advancing.*]

I am ready ; take care of yourself.

MEANWELL. [*Interposing.*]

Put up your sword, Bellmour, he's unworthy your notice,

MARQUIS. [*To Meanwell.*]

Pray, Mr. Meanwell, who is this fellow? By the lord I must know his name before I will dispute with him any more, or I may debase my rank and dignity, by fighting with a peasant.

BELLMOUR.

Peasant ! damnation ! [*Drawing*] Draw and defend yourself, or quit the house this instant,

MARQUIS.

I leave you to yourselves for the present :—We may happen to meet on another place :—In the mean time I shall make it my business to enquire who you are ; and if I find—

BELLMOUR.

Shall I wait on your lordship down stairs ?

MARQUIS.

No, no ; I dispense with your attendance till I know your name and family ; and then perhaps—

BELLMOUR.

Know then, in the first place, I am a gentleman ; my name is Bellmour.

MARQUIS.

A gentleman are you ? May be so ; but as there's many a packy cit that decorates himself with that appellation, I must know a little more of you be-

fore I have any thing more to say to you. In the mean time you may thank my nice notions of honour that you are living, and so farewell.

[*Exit. Marquis hastily.*]

BELLMOUR. [*Following him to the Door.*]

Insolent rascal!

S C E N E XI.

MEANWELL. [*Smiling.*]

So, he's gone.

BELLMOUR.

This poltroon is a disgrace to nobility! for heaven's sake on what account did this coxcomb insult you?

MEANWELL.

On an account you little conjecture:—on your's.

BELLMOUR.

On mine?

MEANWELL.

On yours!

BELLMOUR.

How could that be?

MEANWELL.

I'll explain it to you presently. This terrible lord has lately found out that the marchioness D'Orcey, your deceased aunt, left a sum of money in my hands, amounting to thirty thousand pounds.

BELLMOUR.

Thirty thousand pounds!

MEANWELL.

No less. And this considerable legacy she deposited with me, in trust for your brother and you. I proved just to the trust reposed in me; and agree-
able

able to her desire, kept it a secret till after the death of her lord ; your brother happening to die before him, you became alone entitled to this large sum. So you see, that at the very instant you thought your fortune the most desperate, she was showering a profusion of favours upon you. The huffing blade you saw here just now, came to lay claim to this legacy, in virtue of being his uncle's executor ; but you have dismissed him in the manner he deserved, and saved me the trouble.

BELLMOUR.

I am less struck with this unexpected change in my fortune, than with the unparalleled generosity with which you have acted, and which has few precedents in this, or almost any other age. Receive then the tribute of my grateful thanks, and be assured it shall be the study of my future life to merit this excess of goodness and magnanimity.

MEANWELL.

You offend me by such encomiums ; the man who does justice does no more than his duty. But tell me what mean these mournful weeds ?

BELLMOUR.

They are the consequences of the misfortunes of my father, who was killed in the last campaign in America. I fought by his side for a considerable time, and ventured my own life in the defence of him who gave me being ; till overpowered by numbers, I was obliged to give way ; and after seeing him fall lifeless at my feet, sunk myself, covered over with wounds. The enemy rifled me of all I had about me : and to add to my misfortune, the fate of the day declared so completely against us, that the whole baggage of our army fell into the enemy's hands ; and after remaining prisoner for upwards of seven months, during which time I

underwent all the hardships of the most rigorous confinement, I made my escape naked and pennyless, and got on board a vessel with some few of my fellow prisoners, which brought us over to Europe. At my landing here I begged these rags you see me in, of a poor labouring man, on a promise of rewarding him handsomely when arrived among my friends. In this condition I made the best of my way to your house, in hopes of meeting relief from your known generosity; but how little did I expect to find myself in possession of so large a fortune?—

MEANWELL.

And of a wife too!

BELLMOUR. [*Hastily.*]

Good heavens! what do I hear? Is it possible that I shall possess the lovely object?—

MEANWELL.

Hear me; my old neighbour, the baron, who has a sincere affection for me, has made two proposals; one of which relates to you, the other to myself. I was daily in expectation of your return home; and as we were talking together the other day, I acquainted him with the secret of the legacy I reserved for you, which put the thought of a double alliance into his head. You must know he has a niece, who is a very agreeable young lady, and has a handsome fortune; now he made me an offer of her for your wife; so that if you are inclinable you may have her out of hand.—You seem thoughtful, Charles. I assure you it is a match every way suitable to you.

BELLMOUR.

Hum! but what was his other proposal?

MEANWELL.

MEANWELL.

Upon my word a very advantageous one; for my daughter Harriet.

BELLMOUR.

As how?

MEANWELL.

Why the baron has lately sent for his nephew, count Spangle, home from his travels; do you know him?

BELLMOUR.

I do not.

MEANWELL.

He is a very clever young man, rich, well made, keeps the best company, and is prodigiously well-bred; but, between you and I, a most egregious coxcomb.

BELLMOUR.

And does he love miss Harriet?

MEANWELL.

He has never seen her yet. To-day he is to make his first visit; and I doubt not but my daughter will be greatly taken with him, on account of his genteel address, that is all I want; for we shall have time enough to cure him of his foppishness after marriage; and as this will be so great a match for Harriet, who, you know, has but a very small fortune, I readily embrace the offer of him for a son-in-law, and expect his uncle to bring him here every minute.

BELLMOUR.

Pray, sir, then I must discover to you——

S C E N E XII.

Enter a Servant.

SERVANT.

Sir, the baron and count Spangle. [Exit.

MEANWELL.

36 The LEGACY; Or,

MEANWELL. [*To Bellmour.*]

Odso! I must go and receive them then; I'll return again as soon as possible. [*Exit. Meanwell.*]

S C E N E XIII.

BELLMOUR. [*Solus.*]

He's gone without giving me time to reply.—
How will he be surpriz'd when I tell him?—But
heavens! is not this my Harriet coming this way?
It is.—Be calm, my heart; I'll step aside to see
if she will recollect me in this dress.

[*Goes to the back part of the stage.*]

S C E N E XIV.

Enter HARRIET, *hastily*; LETTICE
following her.

LETTICE.

Who, in the name of goodness, are you running
after?

HARRIET.

Come along, come along, my dear wench! I
am sure I have seen him; it can be no other, by
the flutterings of my heart.—O heav'ns! it is he
himself! [*Perceiving Bellmour, who stands in a
musing posture.*]

LETTICE.

He? What he? That figure!

HARRIET. [*In a trembling voice.*]

Lettice?

LETTICE.

Well, what d'ye want with Lettice?

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

What cruel mischance can have reduced him to this condition? [*To Bellmour.*] Good heav'ns! Mr. Bellmour, is it you I see?

BELLMOUR.

I blush to appear before you thus——

HARRIET. [*To Lettice.*]

Yes, it is him; I know his voice.

LETTICE.

His voice? whose voice?

HARRIET, [*Trembling.*]

The voice—the voice——of——Lord! how I tremble.

LETTICE.

Mercy on me! have you lost your senses?

HARRIET. [*To Bellmour.*]

I am struck dumb with amazement! What can be the meaning of this appearance? Speak, and ease my impatience.

BELLMOUR. [*Smiling.*]

I must own, my appearance is not the most elegant, at present; but I hope very soon to——

HARRIET.

Lord, what a strange metamorphosis! May I not know how it has happened?

BELLMOUR.

My dearest Harriet, this change is the effect of my misfortunes—Love, that made me leave you in search of fortune, thro' unknown climes, has brought me back as you now see me——

LETTICE.

Oh, then, I presume a certain melancholly epistle, that came to hand just now——

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Was from me. When I left home, I went to America, in hopes of making a fortune, that might render me deserving of her hand, whom I love more than life.

LETTICE.

And fortune, I find, has play'd you a slippery trick, as she has done many a lover besides.

BELLMOUR.

I complain of her no longer. I am amply rewarded for all my sufferings, since I once more behold my lovely Harriet; and find her generous heart feels for my distress. By all that's good, she weeps!

HARRIET.

What heart can be insensible to such merit in distress?

BELLMOUR. [*Taking her hand.*]

But, say; do you love me still?

HARRIET. [*Leaning on him.*]

With unabated tenderness.

BELLMOUR.

And does not my present condition lessen me in your esteem?

HARRIET.

Ungenerous supposition! Let base and grovelling minds be influenced by outside shew; a generous heart regards the person, abstracted from every other consideration.

LETTICE.

I'll be hang'd, madam, if this is not the gentleman you have been speaking to me about.

HARRIET.

I had better have kept my own council a little longer.

LETTICE.

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LETTICE.

Not in the least. But, pray, sir, considering how scurvily you have been treated by fortune, how have you been able to keep your hopes alive?

BELLMOUR.

More than ever.

HARRIET.

As to me——

LETTICE.

But are not you afraid, if all this story of your misfortunes, and being reduced to beggary, is true; are not you afraid, I say, of some little obstacle in the way of your happiness?—My master, for instance; do you think that he will ever——

BELLMOUR.

What can I fear, while my Harriet loves me?

HARRIET.

I declare to you, Lettice, I would sooner take him, as he now appears, than receive the offers of the most exalted fortune.

BELLMOUR.

Let me hug my misfortunes, since they serve to prove to me such matchless love and constancy.—

S C E N E XV.

Enter COUNT SPANGLE.

[Who steps affectedly up to a glass, and stands for some time adjusting his dress, and admiring himself in a ridiculous manner.]

LETTICE.

Mercy on us! who have we here? See! see! what airs it gives itself.

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

Oh! his appearance is enough to tell you who he is.

LETTICE.

As I live, I believe it is count Spangle, nephew to our neighbour the baron.—

COUNT. [*Advances, bowing affectedly to Harriet, who turns from him with contempt.*]

Madam, your slave—I presume I am sufficiently known to you, without announcing myself by name.

HARRIET.

Really, sir, you are mistaken, for you are an absolute stranger to me.

LETTICE. [*Apart to Harriet.*]

Don't you think him a pretty figure?

HARRIET. [*Aside.*]

I see nothing in him but the ridiculous fop.

COUNT.

I was here yesterday; you must certainly have seen me.

HARRIET.

Not I, upon my word, sir.

COUNT.

Well, now then, I present myself to you, as one whom the power of your divine charms has riveted your eternal slave—Those eyes, those charming eyes, have pierced a heart, till now, insensible to all the efforts of love and beauty.

LETTICE. [*Aside to Harriet.*]

Lord! what a number of fine things all in a breath!

HARRIET. [*Aside.*]

He's a well-dressed fool; that's the most you can say of him.

COUNT.

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COUNT.

Lovely miss Harriet, you are silent! What means this cold reserve? Say, charming maid, am I to have your hand without your heart?

HARRIET. [*To Lettice.*]

My hand! What does he mean?

LETTICE. [*Aside.*]

I'm afraid I can guess.

COUNT.

Adorable creature! vouchsafe me one word;
[*Going to take her hand, she pulls it back.*]

HARRIET.

Good heav'ns! what insipid fustian!

COUNT.

At least, bless me with a look.

HARRIET. [*Turning from him.*]

For what, sir?

COUNT.

For what, my angel? because I shall very soon have a right to that, and other marks of your affection.

LETTICE.

Marks of my lady's affection! Indeed, sir, I believe you deceive yourself.

COUNT.

Why, mrs. Abigail, do you think I am a person to be despis'd?

LETTICE. [*Making a low courtesy.*]

Oh! lord, sir, by no means!

COUNT.

If high birth, a title, figure, and an agreeable person, can please, I think I may pretend——

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

Doubtless, sir, you have abundance of merit ;
but —————

COUNT.

Kill me not ; O cruel, but angelical maid !

HARRIET.

Angelical ! Indeed, sir, I am but a simple mortal.

COUNT.

A mortal ? Blaspheme not such heavenly perfections. You are a goddess ! A divinity ! Made for love and adoration.

HARRIET.

For heav'n's sake, truce with your high flights, and descend to talk in a style that I can understand,

COUNT.

What must I say, then, to please you ?

HARRIET.

Nothing.

COUNT.

Nothing ?

LETTICE.

Yes, sir ; for my lady chuses to be adored in silence.

COUNT.

Indeed ! then, I am mute ; lost to the power of utterance : but, permit me, thus lowly bending at your feet, to gaze on you with tacit love and admiration ; and judge of my passion from my respectful silence. [*Here he kneels to Harriet, and makes love, affectedly, in dumb show.*]

LETTICE.

Well, may I die if this is not an admirable scene.

HARRIET.

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HARRIET.

I shall lose all patience. Come, Lettice.

[Going.]

LETTICE. [To Count Spangle, who still remains on his knees.]

Do not let us disturb you, sir; we shall be back again presently.

COUNT. [Laying hold of Harriet's gown.]

By heav'ns you shall not leave me thus! but stay, and hear me recount the joys, the extasies, we shall taste, when blessed in the possession of each other.

HARRIET. [Aside to Lettice.]

Joys! ecstasies! possession! Mercy on me, Lettice! I tremble, lest my father should have engag'd my hand.

COUNT.

Yes, tomorrow! Tomorrow! you are to be my charming bride; and I, the beloved and happy husband of the loveliest of her sex.

HARRIET.

How! I your bride?

COUNT.

Yes, adorable miss Harriet. My uncle and your father have this instant settled the preliminaries, and I flew hither, on the wings of love, to give you notice of it; but, instead of expressing equal rapture on your side, you——

BELLMOUR.

You must look for no raptures here, I'll assure you sir. Your brilliant figure will have no effect on this lady's heart.

COUNT.

And why so, pray?

BELL-

B E L L M O U R.

Because it is already engaged.

C O U N T.

Oh, mighty well; then I shall disengage it, that's all. I have a happy talent at dismissing a rival.

B E L L M O U R.

And yet, there is a person in the world, who, perhaps, may stand his ground, in defiance to this happy talent of yours.

C O U N T.

Who is he?

B E L L M O U R.

He who loves the best, and is the most beloved.

C O U N T.

What prating fellow is this? Hearn'e, man, do you know who you are speaking to?

B E L L M O U R.

Truly, I have not that honour; but, nevertheless, I'll answer for it, you'll be obliged to lower your topfail.

C O U N T.

'Sdeath! friend, don't provoke me. If you have any regard to yourself, go about your business.

B E L L M O U R.

I am not a person to be easily frightened, sir, as I am ready to convince you, if you think proper.

C O U N T.

Fire and fury! Quit the place this instant, or, by all that's sacred——

S C E N E

S C E N E Last.

Enter the BARON, and MEANWELL.
[*The Baron runs and catches Bellmour in his arms.*]

BARON.

My dear mr. Bellmour, let me embrace you. I heartily felicitate you on the happy change in your affairs; and am rejoiced that your merit is rewarded with so noble a fortune, as I find my worthy friend, mr. Meanwell, has reserved for you.

BELLMOUR.

My dear baron, your friendly joy augments my own.

COUNT. [*Afide.*]

My dear mr. Bellour! my dear baron! Zounds! I have mistaken my man, I believe.

HARRIET. [*Afide to Lettice.*]

Good God! Lettice, what do I hear!

LETTICE. [*Afide.*]

Hear? why, that your lover is rich, when you thought him a beggar.

HARRIET.

Heav'n send it may have no ill effect upon his heart.

LETTICE.

Amen, say I, since you wish it; but, in good faith, it is hard trusting to the sex.

HARRIET.

Peace! I will not harbour so base a thought of him.

BARON.

Mr. Meanwell tells me, he already acquainted you with our intentions; and I am now come to let

let you know, that we have settled every thing, and only wait for your consent. I am ready to give you my niece; and my good neighbour here, assures me, that you are ready to accept her hand. She'll please you, my boy, or I'm much mistaken. This young gentleman is her brother, who came up to town since you left us, and is, as you see, a good pretty figure of a fellow; well bred; a man of quality; and, with all these accomplishments, has a very large fortune, which he is willing to bestow on this young lady, in consideration of her merit and beauty. She has not quite so much money as I could wish, and, indeed, imagined at first; but no matter—Come, nephew, let me introduce you to your brother-in-law that is to be. A little acquaintance with him will make you think yourself happy in such a relation. Embrace him, I say, and be better acquainted.

C O U N T. [*Going up to Bellmour in confusion.*]

Sir—I—Upon my honour, I am extremely sorry, sir—my mistake—but I hope—

B E L L M O U R.

You seem surpris'd, my lord—Let this teach you, not always to judge of a man from his dress.

C O U N T.

You are perfectly right, sir: before Gad, I am really immensely confounded—but, I ask your pardon, from the bottom of my soul.

B E L L M O U R. [*Embracing him.*]

And I as heartily give it you. Now, sir, [*To the Baron.*] I must undeceive you.

B A R O N.

Undeceive me! how?

BELL-

B E L L M O U R.

By telling you, that I should esteem it a singular honour and happiness, to accept the hand you offer me, if I was not already engag'd.

M E A N W E L L.

Engag'd? what do you mean?

L E T T I C E. [*Afide.*]

Now for it, madam.

H A R R I E T. [*Afide.*]

Support me, Lettice. I can hardly breathe.

M E A N W E L L.

Sure, Bellmour, you have not play'd the fool, and marry'd unknown to your friends?

B E L L M O U R.

No, sir, I am not yet marry'd; but I am bound, by love and honour, in as strict ties as those of matrimony, that no authority, no consideration, shall ever make me renounce.

H A R R I E T.

Lettice, I revive.

L E T T I C E.

Blessings on him!

M E A N W E L L.

This is very extraordinary; but, come, unbosom yourself with freedom, and let us know the person to whom you have thus engag'd yourself.

B E L L M O U R.

I shall imitate your generous example, sir, who might so easily have with-held the large fortune you have put me in possession of; and, with an openness equal to your own, reveal to you the whole secret of my inmost soul. It is out of my power to return your goodness, by complying with your present

present request; what I can do, I am ready to perform. Thus, on my knees then, let me entreat you to grant me the lovely Harriet for my wife: or, in case you think me undeserving of so precious a gift, take back the fortune you have so lately given me, which can have no charms for me, if I am not permitted to share it with the only woman I have found worthy of my love.

C O U N T.

But heark'e, my dear, you know very well that this lady is intended for me. The affair is determined, irrevocably fixed.

B E L L M O U R.

If so, together with her hand, take the legacy her father reserved for me.

C O U N T.

With all my heart: and, to show you that I do not bear malice, I am willing to lie under this obligation to you.

B A R O N. [*To the Count.*]

How, sir! is not your own fortune and mine sufficient to satisfy you? without—

C O U N T.

To be sure, nuncle; but, you know that my honour is concerned in vindicating my claim to the lady; and, since this gentleman insists that the legacy shall go with her; why, it would be brutal, to the last degree, to refuse so generous an offer.

M E A N W E L L.

This offer shews all the nobleness of Bellmour's soul; but I should be an infamous wretch to take advantage of it. No; the legacy shall be his. As to my engagements, as a man of honour, I cannot break them. Harriet shall be your's;
but

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 49

but you must take her without a fortune, as I have already told your uncle.

BELLMOUR.

I hope, however, you will permit the lady to speak for herself. I am sensible, you are too tender and indulgent a parent, to engage your daughter's hand, without consulting her sentiments in regard to the person you propose her to pass the remainder of her life with.

MEANWELL.

Rightly observed.

BARON.

Well then, madam, give me leave to ask you, if my nephew has the happiness of pleasing you?

MEANWELL.

Oh, I can answer for her. Yes.

LETTICE.

And I say, No.

MEANWELL.

How! mrs. pert! Have you the insolence—
[To the Baron.] Be not surpris'd, sir; I am well convinc'd of my daughter's prudence and virtue.

LETTICE.

Very true, sir; but, notwithstanding all that, my mistress cannot help it, if another has found the way to her heart, and—

MEANWELL.

Why, is there such an one? Who is he? Speak.

LETTICE.

Nay, nay, she's of age to answer for herself.

MEANWELL. [To Harriet.]

Tell me this instant, what is his name?

HARRIET.

I dare not.

VOL. III.

C

MEAN-

50 The LEGACY; Or,

MEANWELL.

Dare not! Tell me, I say.

LETTICE.

Why, his name is——

MEANWELL.

What?

LETTICE.

Can't you guess, now?

MEANWELL.

'Sdeath! don't play with my impatience.

LETTICE. [*Pushing Bellmour towards him.*]

Why, take the man and the name together, then.

MEANWELL.

How! Bellmour! Is this true, Harriet?

HARRIET.

It is, sir. I confess it.

BELLMOUR.

Thus, on my knees, let me thank you for so generous a confession. [*Kneels and kisses her hand.*]

HARRIET.

Rise, sir, for heaven's sake! I am overwhelm'd with confusion.

BARON. [*To the Count.*]

The town is taken, nephew; we had best draw off our troops.

MEANWELL.

Upon my honour, baron, I was entirely ignorant of this; as you may judge by my surprise—It is what I never once dreamt of.

BARON.

I see no reason why you should be surpris'd. They have been long acquainted with each other; and, I think, you might easily have——

MEAN-

The FORTUNE-HUNTER. 51

MEANWELL. [To Bellmour.]

And have you really a passion for my daughter likewise?

BELLMOUR.

I have lov'd her from her earliest infancy; and it was in order to make myself worthy of her, that I undertook the long voyage in which I have undergone so many sufferings.

COUNT.

I am sorry for it, with all my soul; but I must tell you, that I love miss Harriet as well as you can do, and am not a person to resign my claim to any man living——[To Meanwell.] Look you, sir, you have given me your word, and I shall insist upon your keeping it.

MEANWELL.

It is no longer in my power, sir. I cannot make my daughter miserable for life, by marrying her against her inclinations. She has placed them on this young gentleman; he is deserving of them; and, I think, I should act unjustly in refusing my consent.

BARON.

Come, nephew, I see you must give up your pretensions——

MEANWELL.

I hope, baron, you will pardon——

BARON.

No excuses, my good friend; I cannot blame you in the least.

COUNT.

I flatter'd myself, miss, you would think me deserving of your hand: however, you will repent having refused me, take my word for it.

C

HARRIET.

HARRIET.

I must stand to the consequences, my lord.

COUNT.

You are blinded by a foolish fondness, at present; but, when time and experience have opened your eyes, you will see your error; and confess you had better have made choice of me; you will, indeed, my princess. But, I would have you save yourself the trouble of an application to me, in that case; for, I shall leave you to your fate, I assure you, without vouchsafing you one single syllable of comfort.

HARRIET.

And you might have sav'd yourself the trouble of so ridiculous a declaration.

BARON.

Body o'me, nephew, you are a great coxcomb. I always thought you too vain; and now I am confirmed in my opinion. Madam, give me leave to assure you, that, had I known your affection for this gentleman, and his for you, I would never have been the instrument of disturbing the happiness of two persons so deserving of each other. Forgive me, mr. Bellmour, for the involuntary fault I was guilty of, in obstructing your happiness. You are now going to enjoy the reward due to your merit and constancy, from the hands of the most noble and disinterested of men. [*Pointing to Meanwell.*] Let his example be the rule of your conduct through life; and, like him, you'll taste a satisfaction known only to the good and worthy;

Who, for fair honour, riches disregard,
And trust to virtue, as it's own reward.

END OF THE FORTUNE-HUNTER.

THE
GENEROUS ARTIFICE;
OR, THE
REFORMED RAKE.

C 3

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

WEALTHY.
TRUMAN.
CLERIMONT,
SUBTLE.
LA FLEUR.
A Porter.

ISABELLA.
EUCY.

SCENE, *Wealthy's house.*

T H E

GENEROUS ARTIFICE.

A C T I. S C E N E I.

Enter WEALTHY *and* SUBTLE.

S U B T L E.

ONCE more I must tell you, sir, that the only way to reform your son, is to get him a wife out of hand.

W E A L T H Y.

A wife! why what woman do'st think will venture on him, loaded as he is with debt, immers'd in debauchery, and ruined in his credit?

S U B T L E.

I'll warrant you there are those who would venture on him, notwithstanding all this.

56 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

WEALTHY.

But I really could not answer it to my conscience, to give my consent even if he was starving; and might have the greatest fortune in Paris.

SUBTLE.

Upon my word, sir, your seem violently enraged against him.

WEALTHY.

And have I not sufficient reason, think you? Besides, what vexes me more than all the rest, is, that his bad conduct has been the means of breaking off a match with a most amiable young woman, for whom I designed him; and who, by her merit, goodness and virtues, would have made him the happiest of all men.

SUBTLE.

By your description of the lady I should presume it was miss Isabella whom you designed for him.

WEALTHY.

The same. But I have too great a friendship and regard for her to make her miserable. Ungracious wretch! I am resolved never to see him more; and I charge him never to appear before me again.

SUBTLE.

But after all, my dear sir, what occasion is there for all this outcry? Your son has done no more than all the young fellows of his age do now-a-days.

WEALTHY.

Hold your tongue, sirrah! I know what reason I have to be offended with him, and——

SUBTLE.

For God's sake, sir, don't put yourself in a passion; I only desire you to hear me a few words.

WEALTHY.

WEALTHY.

Well, mr. rascal, pray what can you say in excuse for him?

SUBTLE.

Ay, ay, you may abuse me as much as you please; but I shall speak only what is reasonable. Do you think that nothing is to be allowed for youth? Come, come, sir; you had your frolicks and your fancies, at his years.

WEALTHY.

No matter what I had, jackanapes; I am speaking of what my son now is.

SUBTLE.

Well, he is a rake; and have not you been the same?

WEALTHY.

No, impudence! tho' I was all life and gaiety in my younger days; yet my whole study was how to get money.

SUBTLE.

And his is how to spend it. I am sure the one is a much more noble passion than the other.

WEALTHY.

Look'e, Subtle, one word is as good as a hundred. I have done with him; he has nothing further to expect from me.

SUBTLE.

Good, good, stay now. With all this violent rage of yours, I would venture to lay a handsome wager that you doat on him still.

WEALTHY.

I! on the contrary I hate, I detest him; I——
What is the scoundrel laughing at?

C 5

SUBTLE.

58 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

S U B T L E.

Excuse me, fir, but I cannot help it for the soul of me; when I hear so fond a parent as I know you to be, talk of hating so amiable a son as my master.

W E A L T H Y.

Why, I believe, Subtle, he has good principles; he is sound at heart, hey?

S U B T L E.

Lord, fir! he has the best heart in the world: and then his duty and tenderness for you are inexpressible.

W E A L T H Y.

I always thought it, and I have said as much to mr. Truman, but he will not believe it; nor suffer me for some time past to listen to the dictates of a father's love.

S U B T L E.

That same friend of your's, fir, give me leave to say it, is an implacable tyrant.

W E A L T H Y.

He is rather too severe, that's certain; but this very severity has been of great use to me: I have always profited by his advice, Subtle.

S U B T L E.

Sir?

W E A L T H Y.

I could wish to place a confidence in thee, Subtle; but thou hast so often deceived me.

S U B T L E.

Never, fir! when you paid me handsomely.

W E A L T H Y.

Rascal!

S U B T L E.

Rascal? there again! I disclose myself to you without reserve, and you call me rascal. Now, in
my

my opinion, nothing can be a stronger mark of a man of honour than plain dealing.

WEALTHY.

And is it the mark of a man of honour to take money on both sides too?

SUBTLE.

Why, sir; when I take money from your son, it is for telling him what you say of him; when I take it from you, it is to acquaint you with what he does. Now, by telling him the reflections you make on his conduct, I furnish him with so many lessons of morality for amending it: and by giving you an account of his follies and extravagancies, I give you an opportunity of redressing them. So that by which soever party I am paid, you must confess I get the money honestly. Lord bless me, sir; you cannot think what a tender conscience I have.

WEALTHY.

Well! well! but to come to the point.—Tell me, Subtle, there's a good lad; and tell me truly, what sort of a disposition is my son in at present?

SUBTLE.

Why, sir; if I am not much mistaken, he begins to see his folly; and is heartily tired of being perpetually harrassed by his creditors and his mistresses.

WEALTHY.

I believe you are in the right, Subtle; for I have observed for these three or four days past, he has not stirred out of the house. Whence comes this sudden change?

SUBTLE.

From a love of liberty, sir.

WEALTHY.

60 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

W E A L T H Y.

How ! can a love of liberty make a man confide himself ?

S U B T L E.

Undoubtedly, sir.

W E A L T H Y.

I don't understand you.

S U B T L E.

Why, then, you must know, sir ; that there are four or five honest gentlemen in daily waiting at our gate, who the instant they should set their eyes upon my master, would most earnestly intreat him to go along with them to a certain place on the other side the water : nay, they would even themselves be at the trouble of shewing him the way thither.

W E A L T H Y.

How ! what !—Has he any bad affair upon his hands ?

S U B T L E.

Troth has he, sir. Oh ! he is most cruelly persecuted.

W E A L T H Y.

I'm in a cold sweat ! persecuted ? by whom ?

S U B T L E.

Some old friends of his, sir ; who are now become his most implacable enemies.

W E A L T H Y.

Who are they ? Dost know their names ?

S U B T L E.

Ay, marry do I, as well as my own. The first is called mr. Selvedge ; the second mr. Tinsel ; the third mr. Fashion ; and the fourth mr. Ragout.

W E A L T H Y.

The REFORMED RAKE. 61

W E A L T H Y.

Zounds! what names are here? Were these fellows my son's friends?

S U B T L E.

His most intimate ones. This one furnished him with the finest broad cloth; the other with the richest lace and embroidery; the third made his cloaths in the most fashionable manner; and the fourth set off his table in the most elegant taste. But alas! such is the inconstancy of man: these very people, wearied out with shewing him a thousand civilities, for which he never made them any return, are now determined to shut him up in a jail for the remainder of his life, to punish him for his ingratitude, as they call it.

W E A L T H Y.

Ah! I understand thee; they have each a writ against him.

S U B T L E.

Neither better nor worse, indeed, sir.

W E A L T H Y.

But tell me; does he owe these worthy gentlemen any great sum?

S U B T L E.

A mere trifle! not worth mentioning.

W E A L T H Y.

Well, but what may the whole amount to?

S U B T L E.

In all I believe;—stay;—ay;—in all I think it may amount to about five thousand pounds; a little more or less.

W E A L T H Y.

Oons! you abominable rascal! Do you call five thousand pounds a trifle?

S U B T L E.

62 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

S U B T L E.

A mere nothing for a man of your substance to pay; and for a beloved son too.

W E A L T H Y.

Get out of my sight! get out of my sight! or I'll treat you as you deserve.—Five thousand pounds!

S U B T L E.

Mighty well, sir:—extremely well; mr. Wealthy, this is very genteel usage.—But let me tell you, sir, you may have occasion for my services; and then you shall pay handsomely for them I assure you. [Going.]

W E A L T H Y. *[Lifting up his cane.]*

Come back, mr. rascal! I have a word or two to say to you yet.

S U B T L E.

Sir! I kiss your hand.

[Exit.]

S C E N E II.

Enter T R U M A N.

W E A L T H Y. *[Walking about in a passion.]*

Five thousand pounds a trifle! what a villain! He has put my blood in a ferment! Ah! my dear friend, are you here; well, what have you done?

T R U M A N. *[Giving him papers:]*

Here are discharges from twelve of the creditors. As I bestirred myself in the affair, I have brought you off for a thousand pounds this bout.

W E A L T H Y.

Well, we must have patience.

T R U M A N.

Igad I have saved you a good five hundred; I stood to the stuff; threaten'd, swore, wheedled.
In

In short, the apprehensions of losing the whole, made these blood-suckers hearken to reason.

WEALTHY.

How much I am obliged to you, my good friend; and how sincerely ought I to make this spendthrift of a son smart for the trouble and expence he puts me to.

TRUMAN.

Let him only still suppose himself over head and ears in debt; and that you are neither able nor willing to pay them for him: and take my word for it this will be a sufficient punishment. I know he is already grieved to the soul, at having incurred your displeasure; and am persuaded that in the midst of all his extravagancies, which the bad company he has kept has drawn him into, he has still preserved a stock of honour and duty, and is at the bottom a good son.

WEALTHY.

A good son! ah, my friend!

TRUMAN.

Yes, mr. Wealthy, I repeat it; a good son. Some of his friends, men of character, and whose words may be depended upon, have assured me that he sincerely laments the uneasiness he causes you; and is under the most dreadful apprehensions lest you should come to the knowledge of his being so deeply in debt. Nay, he is even at this present time using all the methods he can devise to appease his creditors: and not above a day or two ago he brought three of them to my house, and upon his knees entreated me to satisfy them.

WEALTHY. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Upon his knees! poor boy! my heart bleeds for him.

TRUMAN.

64 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

TRUMAN.

Accordingly I paid them with your money, pretending it was my own, and obliged him to give me his note for the payment, which I now return you. You may suppose I promised him not to take any notice of it to you, but at the same time I rated him soundly.

WEALTHY.

I hope you was not too severe upon him.

TRUMAN.

Not enough so—However if there is any truth in man, you will see a surprising change in him.

WEALTHY.

Heavens grant it, and that he may at length make himself worthy of espousing the daughter of our deceased benefactor.

TRUMAN.

That is what I wish as earnestly as you can do; and to say the truth, I do not despair of it.

WEALTHY.

Indeed! Why then let us hasten to put him out of his pain.

TRUMAN.

What do you mean?

WEALTHY.

To let him know that I have paid all his debts.

TRUMAN.

Mercy on us! take care what you do; things are not ripe for such a discovery yet; he must bite of the bridle a little longer. I make it my business every time I see him, to tell him, that you have ruined yourself for him, and that if it was not for my assistance, you could no longer live with credit in the world.

WEALTHY.

The REFORMED RAKE. 65

WEALTHY.

And what does he say to that?

TRUMAN.

He weeps, tears his hair, and is ready to lay violent hands on himself.

WEALTHY. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Can there be a more dutiful child! I'll go to him this instant, and——

TRUMAN.

And what?

WEALTHY.

Tell him I forgive him, and that I have paid all his debts; for do you know the poor soul is now a prisoner in this house.——You smile!

TRUMAN.

I do, this is a trick that I have play'd him

WEALTHY.

That you have play'd him!

TRUMAN.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

But how? Why? Wherefore?

TRUMAN.

I'll tell you then — but heark, I hear some one coming this way — Let us retire to the closet, and I will tell you the whole affair.——Odsso! it is your son himself; what a dejected air he has!

WEALTHY.

My heart bleeds! I can scarcely support the sight; however I'll call up all my resolution, and second you as much as possible.

TRUMAN.

Be resolute and severe.

WEALTHY.

66 THE GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

WEALTHY.

Never fear me; you shall see how cruel I will be to him now.

S C E N E III.

Enter CLERIMONT.

WEALTHY.

So, sir! methinks you are very bold to dare come into my presence! Have I not forbid you to appear in my sight? Let me never see you again.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, you shall be obey'd. I came hither to seek for Subtle, not expecting to meet with you.

WEALTHY.

I say, I command you never to appear before me again.—Oh, my friend, I can hold out no longer.
[*Afide to Truman.*]

TRUMAN. [*Afide to Wealthy.*]

Leave the room then as quick as possible.

CLERIMONT.

It is enough, sir; father, it is enough.

WEALTHY. [*In great agitation.*]

Father! Call me no more by that name—— for look'e, my dear boy!——I am so incens'd against you——And yet I hope——No, I hope for nothing.——You are a wretch unworthy of my tenderness——a——Farewel, my child——Endeavour to amend your conduct; your father entreats it of you——Or by all that's sacred, I'll——Let me begone, I know not what I say. [*Afide to Truman, and Exit.*]

S C E N E

SCENE IV.

CLERIMONT.

What can my father mean? his words and looks little agree with one another. What am I to think?

TRUMAN.

Can you not perceive that you have driven him to despair. The poor old gentleman's brain is turned.

CLERIMONT.

Sure you have not told him ———

TRUMAN.

Is there occasion to tell him any thing more than what your follies and extravagancies daily inform him?

CLERIMONT.

My follies and extravagancies, sir!

TRUMAN.

Nay, nay, never put yourself in a passion; I could find a worse name for them, but I am willing to deal tenderly with you still.

CLERIMONT.

You are perfectly in the right, for I am not fond of harsh expressions.

TRUMAN.

Nor I of insolent airs: besides you know they cannot impose upon me.

CLERIMONT.

Mighty well, sir, ——— but no matter; there is a certain age, at which a man may say any thing. However you talk rather too much like the old man.

TRUMAN:

68 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

TRUMAN.

And you act too much like a young one.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, you used me like a dog the other day; like the vilest slave that ———

TRUMAN.

I used you as you deserved.

CLERIMONT.

As I deserved! 'Tis well! I shall remember this.

TRUMAN.

You ought rather to remember what I have done for you—perhaps it may have slipped your memory; but however my hot young sir, you may henceforward get somebody else to pay your debts. If any of your creditors apply to me again, I shall send them to your father, I assure you.

CLERIMONT.

For God's sake, mr. Truman, what do you mean? Would you drive me to despair?

TRUMAN.

To despair, quotha? No, no, you are in no danger of that; but I must tell you, Clerimont, that I tremble for the consequences of that haughty impatient temper of yours. Odsso, I should not wonder to see you treat your father himself with disrespect, after your behaviour to me.

CLERIMONT.

I would sooner suffer a thousand deaths.

TRUMAN.

And why so? what reason have you to be under any restraint? The poor man has no longer any thing to give you; and if your behaviour should drive him to disinheret you, you can be no great loser you know.

GLE-

The REFORMED RAKE. 69

CLERIMONT.

What do you mean?

TRUMAN.

That if it was not for me, he might want the common necessaries of life.

CLERIMONT.

Impossible!

TRUMAN.

Will you be pleased only to set down and calculate with me what you have cost him for these last eight or nine years only.

CLERIMONT.

Oh Lord! I cannot reckon.

TRUMAN.

True; but you can spend.

CLERIMONT.

My father want the necessaries of life! Good God what do I hear? And what will become of me?

TRUMAN.

Oh! you will do well enough, you can live by your shifts, as many others of your stamp have done, after spending all their substance beforehand.

CLERIMONT.

How! I live by my shifts? I descend to such baseness! No, sir, let me tell you, when I can no longer live like a man of honour, I'll put an end to my misfortunes. I will, you may depend upon it.

TRUMAN.

And how, pray?

CLERIMONT.

As every man of honour does, when reduced to the last extremity. Live by my shifts! 'Sdeath!

TRUMAN.

70 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

TRUMAN.

The expression seems to shock your delicacy wonderfully.

CLERIMONT.

A soul such as mine starts at the thought of such expedients. Besides, I am not so destitute as you may imagine. I am greatly in debt, it is true, but at the same time I have considerable sums owing me; and could I but venture abroad——

TRUMAN.

What hinders you?

CLERIMONT.

Spare your interrogations, if you please; I have my reasons for keeping within doors; and that is sufficient.

TRUMAN.

You chuse retirement, perhaps?

CLERIMONT.

I do so.

TRUMAN.

It is a forced choice, I am afraid.

CLERIMONT.

Forced or not forced, it concerns not you.

TRUMAN.

Oh, oh, I find you have taken a distaste to the world: really this is very edifying.

CLERIMONT.

Zounds, sir, do you make a jest of me?

TRUMAN.

Lord bless me, how irascible you are. But I must take my leave of you. I am going to Fashion's, my tailor; that devil of a fellow never keeps his word with me.

CLER-

THE REFORMED RAKE. 71

CLERIMONT.

Is Fashion your taylor.

TRUMAN.

He is, and he is your's too, I think. Have you any commands for him?

CLERIMONT.

Only be so kind to tell him from me, that he is a damned scoundrel.

TRUMAN.

Oh, he has known that a long time, I am going also to take off some cloth for a suit of cloaths for your father, of a very honest fellow of a wolla-draper, one Selvedge; do you know him?

CLERIMONT.

Yes, by God, I know him well enough; that is another scoundrel.

TRUMAN.

'Odso, well remembered! Pray can you tell me where one Mr. Tinsel lives, a laceman, I want to buy some things of him for my nephew.

CLERIMONT.

Take good care how you deal with him, he cheats by the ell and yard.

TRUMAN.

Oh! he never imposes upon people of my age, he cheats none but your young rakes of quality, and the elder sons of good families, who take up his goods upon trust, in order to dispose of them for ready money. An expedient you are no stranger to, I presume. It helps one out at a dead lift, you know.——You are silent.

CLERIMONT.

You are a malicious devil, Mr. Truman.

TRUMAN.

72 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

TRUMAN. [*Looking at his watch.*]

'Odsso! it is just the hour that I was to be at Ragout's; there are five or six of my intimate friends, and an elegant entertainment waiting for me. The donor of the feast does not pay ready money, indeed, but then Mr. Ragout is the most genteel person in his way. And now I think of it, he has a great regard for you: shall I make your compliments to him?

CLERIMONT.

Oh by all means! and pray tell him from me, that the first time I have the honour to see him, I will wring his neck from his shoulders.

TRUMAN.

What, have you and he quarrell'd? Upon my word I am very sorry for it. Your servant. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E V.

CLERIMONT. [*Alone.*]

I cannot help having a respect for an old and faithful friend, otherwise I should not so long have borne with his reproaches and railleries. Cruel man! I see plainly he is informed of all my affairs, and will not fail to make my father acquainted with them, who will no longer be able to contain himself, and what reproaches shall I have to make myself! Good heavens, I cannot think of it without trembling! Surely there is not so unhappy a wretch upon earth as myself! I love my father, and I am the cause of his ruin: And for what? For blindly giving into the extravagancies of a herd of fools, whom I despise, and hunting after pleasures, that in the possession baffled my expectations, and left me a prey to remorse and disappointment, with the loss of fortune, character, and liberty. But what gives me to desperation, is, that I cannot extricate myself

myself out of the labyrinth into which I have run thro' my imprudence. I have deceiv'd women, who now persecute me with the most implacable hatred, and have rendered myself hateful to the only woman I ever truly loved ; and I have brought a crowd of creditors upon me, that will not suffer me to enjoy a moment's peace, nor breathe in safety the common air. And then what is to become of my father ? Oh thought ! thought ! thou art insupportable. I have nothing now left, but the wretch's last resource, death, and that I am always master to procure to myself. [Exit.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT II. SCENE I.

CLERIMONT *and* SUBTLE.

SUBTLE.

WHAT will your father say, when he knows
of all these fine doings?

CLERIMONT.

As you value your life, let him not know a single
syllable.

SUBTLE.

I can answer for myself, but other people's
tongues, you know —

CLERIMONT.

Well, we must do as we can, however, if he
should take any notice of my affairs to you, be sure
you deny every thing stoutly.

SUBTLE.

You may be sure of that. But pray, sir, are you
under any apprehensions of being taken out of the
house?

CLERIMONT.

And why that question, pray?

SUBTLE.

Because I surpriz'd you just now charging your
pistols. What devilish design is forming in that
brain of yours?

CLERIMONT.

To shoot a certain person thro' the head, who no
longer deserves to live in the world.

SUBTLE.

SUBTLE.

And pray who is this same person ?

CLERIMONT.

Time will shew. — I only wait 'till I have put some things in order to execute my design.

SUBTLE.

Some nocturnal rendezvous, I suppose ?

CLERIMONT.

No, those follies are all at an end with me now ; and even if I was as much at my liberty as heretofore, I would never quit this house.

SUBTLE.

Oh ! ho ! then it is vacation time with you, I find. Mighty well ! but there are some poor female plaintiffs I fancy, who will be terribly enraged at your not giving audience.

CLERIMONT.

Truce with raillery, Subtle, I am no longer in a humour to bear with it. — Leave me to my reflections.

SUBTLE.

Oh ! with all my heart. Throw yourself into that elbow chair, and I will squat down in this, and then let's see who'll reflect the fastest.

CLERIMONT. [*Speaking to himself.*]

Ah too lovely, too deserving Isabella !

SUBTLE. [*The same.*]

Ah divine mrs. Lucy, flower of serving-maids !

CLERIMONT.

Why am I so unworthy of you ? — But I will not die ! — The thoughts of thee will sweeten life, and mitigate my despair.

SUBTLE.

How ravishing are thy smiles ! how deserving art thou

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thou of all my tenderness, and how worthy am I
of pleasing thee!

CLERIMONT.

My soul, and all its faculties are thine, and yet
thou knowest it not. I shall grieve only to part
with you; and my death will give you no uneasiness:
that——that——distracts me.

SUBTLE.

When we are marry'd how fond shall I be of
thee! I shall so hug——so kiss——so touzle thee.—
so——[*to his Master*] Sir, sir, what's the matter with
you? You seem furiously agitated.

CLERIMONT.

I am distracted.

SUBTLE.

And I am quite at my ease.

CLERIMONT. [*Starting.*]

No! I will not die, till I have taken my last
farewell of her.

SUBTLE.

Whither are you going?

CLERIMONT.

I know not——I wish——I dread——Subtle,
fly this instant to Isabella's apartment, and tell her
that I earnestly desire to speak with her.

SUBTLE.

You astonish me, what can you want with her?
consider, she is a modest young lady; you will not
know how to behave to her.

CLERIMONT.

Alas! it is but too true! yet no matter, she
has such an hold on my heart.—I never loved
any woman but her, and to overwhelm thee at once
with surprize, know that I am still more enamour'd
of her virtue than her beauty.

SUBTLE.

S U B T L E.

Her virtue? I am thunderstruck! enamoured of her virtue? I suppose it is to ruin it that you are so fond of it.

C L E R I M O N T.

I would sooner die a thousand deaths, than entertain such a thought. Alas! why have I been so long without knowing, that virtue alone is truly worthy of captivating the heart?

S U B T L E.

Lord, sir, you are over head and ears in the vapours; but after all, what reason is there to torment yourself in this manner? are you the only young man who has been guilty of follies? time gets the better of all these things. You think yourself unworthy of Isabella, perhaps she thinks in a different manner; come, come, you are not the first libertine, who has been beloved by a girl of virtue and understanding.

C L E R I M O N T.

I tell thee, Subtle, Isabella must hate and despise me, I am sure of it.

S U B T L E.

For my part, I love her maid Lucy; I cannot say whether it is on account of her virtue, for I never put it to the trial, but I am very sure she will return my passion; Adad! and here she comes, with her mistress.

S C E N E II.

Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.

L U C Y.

Not dear madam, have you really taken this strange resolution?

D 3

ISABELLA.

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ISABELLA.

What else is left me? would'st thou have me let slip so favourable an opportunity?

LUCY.

Hush, we are overheard.

ISABELLA.

Mercy upon me! so we are [*advancing to Clerimont*] Your servant, sir, it is something extraordinary to find you at home at this time of day, may I ask what detains you within doors?

CLERIMONT.

Madam, I have some business that — This is a puzzling question Subtle. [*Aside to Subtle.*]

SUBTLE.

A little malicious or so, indeed. [*Walks to the other end of the Stage, and coquets with Lucy.*] Good day, pretty Mrs. Lucy.

LUCY.

Your humble servant, Mr. Subtle, why, your master and you are in an idle humour to-day, methinks. [*Here they coquet in dumb show.*]

CLERIMONT.

May I, without being impertinent, madam, ask what was the resolution you was just now speaking of?

ISABELLA.

It was, sir, to go and receive a legacy of five hundred pounds left me by an aunt, who died lately.

CLERIMONT.

I must own, I see nothing very extraordinary in such a resolution.

ISABELLA.

True; but the manner in which I propose to lay it out may perhaps surprize you.

SUBTLE.

The R E F O R M E D R A K E. 79

S U B T L E. [*Afide to his master.*]

If she should have an inclination to make you a present of it, it would come very a-propos.

C L E R I M O N T. [*Afide to Subtle.*]

Peace ! She has too much understanding to make so ridiculous an advance.

S U B T L E. [*Afide.*]

Put the question home, however ; that can do no hurt.

C L E R I M O N T. [*To Isabella, who is going out.*]

Are you going, madam ?

I S A B E L L A.

Yes, sir ; for I have no time to lose : the business is pressing, and my lawyer waits for me.

C L E R I M O N T.

Vouchsafe me a word before we part.

I S A B E L L A.

What have you to say to me ?

C L E R I M O N T.

May I presume to ask one favour of you ?

I S A B E L L A.

What is that, pray, sir ?

C L E R I M O N T.

To inform me what use you propose to make of this legacy of your aunt's ?

I S A B E L L A.

It is all the fortune I have in the world. You know my father left me young, an orphan, and without any dependence upon earth. Your's, with an excess of generosity rarely to be paralleled, received the daughter of his deceased friend as his own ; bred me up under his hospitable roof ; and has been a parent to me in every sense of the word. But now that, by my aunt's decease, I am in possession

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sion of wherewithal to procure me a comfortable subsistence, I am resolved to be no longer a burthen to him, but to employ the little I have in such a manner as will answer all my wants for the rest of my life.

CLERIMONT.

They must be very circumscrib'd then.

ISABELLA.

And so they ought to be. The articles are already drawn.

SUBTLE.

What does she mean? articles of marriage?

LUCY.

No, truly, quite the contrary.

ISABELLA.

I am resolved to retire to a convent, where they are ready to receive me for life, in consideration of assigning over my fortune for my subsistence: and I declare to you, that I shall enter a convent with more joy, than many others leave it to enter into the world again.

CLERIMONT.

Good God! what can have obliged you to form so strange a design? and so suddenly too?

ISABELLA.

Can you ask that question? It is yourself; it is you who are the cause.

CLERIMONT.

Amazement! I, madam! I the cause?

ISABELLA.

You, and you alone.

CLERIMONT.

What is it you tell me?

ISABELLA.

The REFORMED RAKE. 81

ISABELLA.

The truth. Say, sir; is it not you who have ruined your father?

CLERIMONT.

Who has told you so?

ISABELLA.

Himself. He complains of it with tears in his eyes; every day, every hour, every moment. It was but this very morning, in my presence, that he sighed, and took on, in such a manner as would have pierced the most obdurate heart. It is now above three years that I have been a burthen to him; and heaven knows with what satisfaction I now find myself possessed of a small pittance, that enables me to provide for myself, and rid him of that burthen; and should I not think myself to be the most unworthy of all creatures, if I did not make that use of the support which heaven has sent me, which my unhappy situation dictates to me.

CLERIMONT.

Alas! what you say is but too just. Farewell; too lovely Isabella; I shall not long regret your loss.

ISABELLA. [*Angry.*]

I believe you, sir

LUCY.

A very pretty compliment, truly! a mighty affectionate farewell.

CLERIMONT.

More affectionate than you imagine, Lucy.

SUBTLE. [*To Lucy, half-crying.*]

Are folks regretted after they are dead, Lucy?

LUCY.

Why? do you think your master is going to die?

D 5

SUBTLE.

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SUBTLE.

Ay, and I too I can tell you, if you should follow your mistress.

LUCY.

Madam, this claims some attention.

ISABELLA.

Psha! you fool; canst thou not perceive that both master and man are making a jest of us? Is there any reason to believe, from the life mr. Clerimont has led, that he is a man to die for love? What a simple wench art thou, to give heed to such idle flourishes!

CLERIMONT. [*In great agitation.*]

Madam! madam! do not drive me to despair. I cannot dress my passion up in apt terms to please a lady's ear; but I am prepared to give you the most undeniable proofs of it, by sacrificing my life this instant at your feet. I am, madam; I am —

SUBTLE. [*To Lucy.*]

I am not quite so well prepared as my master; but I would not have you tempt me too far; pr'ythee do not.

LUCY.

Lord, madam, they make me tremble!

ISABELLA. [*With an air of disdain.*]

Is it possible any creature can be so credulous?

CLERIMONT. [*Attempting to draw his sword.*]

Well, then, cruel fair one, if you must be convinced——

ISABELLA. [*Holding him.*]

Good heavens, mr. Clerimont! what are you about to do?

SUBTLE.

Make haste to prevent me, Lucy, or I shall——

LUCY.

LUCY.

Oh ! I am in no such hurry.

SUBTLE.

Faith you are in the right ;—I will not kill myself till I have seen you safe in the convent ; but then—look to it——

CLERIMONT. [*Hastily to Isabella.*]

Confess this instant that you believe I love you ;
or——

ISABELLA.

Well, well, I do believe it.

CLERIMONT.

That I adore you.

ISABELLA. [*Tenderly.*]

Well, I will believe all you would have me.

CLERIMONT.

And that I shall die with regret for your loss, if I do not die before you enter the convent.

ISABELLA.

Before I enter the convent !

CLERIMONT.

Yes, madam. Believe what I now tell you, and I shall die contented.

ISABELLA.

I must confess you surprize me. I had not the least reason to expect such a behaviour from you ; but your words carry an air of truth that convince me ; and I cannot refrain from owning that I am sensible——

CLERIMONT.

You overjoy me. To this goodness add that of promising me that you will not enter the convent till after I have disposed of this wretched being.

ISABELLA.

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ISABELLA.

Good God! what do you mean?

CLERIMONT.

In all probability you will not long remain a stranger to my meaning. Do me the kindness to assure my father, from me, how sensibly I am grieved at having so barbarously abused his goodness. Will you promise me what I now ask of you? I conjure you to do it by all that you hold most dear. Once more, adorable Isabella, farewell.

ISABELLA.

Yes, Clerimont, I do promise you,—I swear.—I —Lucy, let us quit this place; his looks terrify me, I am ready to faint.

[Exeunt Isabella and Lucy.]

S C E N E III.

SUBTLE.

Do you know, my ever-honoured master, that you talk in a very unaccountable manner? And then, your looks carry such despair in them, that they terrify every one; and me more than the rest. Give me leave to ask you one little question, and promise me you will not be angry.

CLERIMONT.

I promise thee I will not.

SUBTLE.

Well then, under correction, are you going mad?

CLERIMONT. *[Sighing.]*

Wretch that I am! Dost thou remember what Isabella told me concerning my father? I am no longer worthy to live.

SUBTLE.

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SUBTLE. [*Kissing his hand.*]

My dear, dear master!

CLERIMONT.

Be comforted, Subtle; I shall not forget thy faithful services.

SUBTLE. [*Crying.*]

Lord bless me, sir! what would you be at? Forget them, forget them; so you do but live. Mercy on us! you talk as if you was going to make your will.

CLERIMONT. [*With a resolute air.*]

No! I am not to be moved. I charge thee, Subtle, not to afflict thyself: if thou dost, it will be the worse for thee, I can assure you.

SUBTLE.

Zounds! what does he mean? [*Aside.*] I, sir! I afflict myself? not I indeed. I never had so great an inclination to laugh in all my life.

CLERIMONT.

To laugh? Execrable villain! are my misfortunes to be laugh't at?

SUBTLE.

Oh, Lord, no sir! No, no. I—I—I neither laugh, nor cry, sir.

CLERIMONT.

That is as I would have it——Here, take this letter.

SUBTLE. [*Seizing and trembling.*]

This letter, sir! Yes, sir.

CLERIMONT.

Carry it, this instant, to that Jew, that Turk, that cut-throat, Solomon, that lives just by——

SUBTLE.

Ay, this is something like.

CLERIMONT.

CLERIMONT.

And be sure you bring me an answer. If he should refuse to comply with what I desire of him in that letter, fly into a rage against him; threaten, abuse him; and, to frighten him still more, tell him he may expect the most dreadful consequences from my rage and resentment.

SUBTLE.

Let me alone to manage him, sir. I'll give him a sweat, I warrant him.

CLERIMONT.

I shall wait for your return, in order to give you another commission.

SUBTLE.

May I take the liberty to ask what it may be?

CLERIMONT.

Why, I would have you take my cloaths, and sell them for what you can get, and bring me the money.

SUBTLE. [*Crying.*]

Sir!—dear sir!

CLERIMONT. [*Offering to strike b.m.*]

Rascal! are you crying again?

SUBTLE.

I, sir?—Lord, I am sure I would be very merry if I durst; but I am neither the one nor the other. I will go and execute your commands.

CLERIMONT.

And I will retire to my chamber till you come back; for my father may, perhaps, come into this room, and he has forbidden me to appear in his presence.

SUBTLE.

Here comes mr. Truman.

CLERIMONT.

The REFORMED RAKE. 87

CLERIMONT.

I dread the sight of him, even more than that
of my father, [Exit.

S C E N E IV.

Enter TRUMAN.

TRUMAN.

Hey day! What's the matter, Subtle? you
seem strangely disordered.

SUBTLE.

Truly, I have reason enough. Do you know,
that my poor master's wits are gone a wool-ga-
thering?

TRUMAN.

What dost mean?

SUBTLE.

What do I mean? why, he falls into such un-
accountable fits, that he frightens me out of my
senses. And I have dreadful apprehensions, lest
the rage he is possessed with should drive him to
commit some desperate act upon——

TRUMAN.

Upon whom?

SUBTLE.

Upon himself. Do you know, fir, that I have
strong reasons to believe he has a design to blow
out his own brains?

TRUMAN. [*Sneeringly.*]

The devil he has!

SUBTLE.

I surpris'd him, just now, charging his pistols,
and trying postures before a glass. His brain is
turned, take my word for it.

TRUMAN. [*Smiling.*]

Seriously?

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E.

Seriously. And I should not wonder in the least to find him dead when I come back.

T R U M A N.

A very moving affair, indeed!

S U B T L E.

Icod, sir, you may make a jest of it, if you please; but, let me tell you, it is a serious matter.

T R U M A N.

Well, as I hope to live, the fellow puts so melancholly a face upon the story, that it might impose upon any one who did not know him. Your master has given you a mighty pretty part in this farce; and to do you justice, you perform it to the life.

S U B T L E.

If I was in a humour for laughing now, I could divert myself very heartily at your pretended cunning: but, by my soul, it is no joking matter. Do you think, pray, if he did not look upon himself as a dead man already, that he would go and sell all his cloaths? You will have a proof in a minute of the truth of what I say to you; for I myself, d'ye see, am charged with that business; and am to set about it as soon as I have delivered this letter, and brought an answer.

T R U M A N.

Will you trust me with a sight of it?

S U B T L E.

Most readily; besides, it is not sealed; and I am as curious to know the contents of it as yourself, for I have not yet had time to read it.

T R U M A N.

Well, your curiosity will now be satisfied; that is to say, if you are really ignorant of the contents.

S U B T L E.

S U B T L E.

Why, do you take me for a liar, fir?

T R U M A N.

I shall not absolutely say that; but this I know for certain, my good mr. Subtle, that you are very apt to substitute the fertile inventions of your own brain in the room of truth.

S U B T L E.

And you, fir, out of your great care not to be imposed upon, become the dupe of your own sagacity.

T R U M A N.

May be so: however, let us read your master's letter to Solomon [*Looking at it.*] Upon my word the superscription is in an original stile. [*Reads.*] "To the arch usurer, Solomon." A very pretty title he has complimented him with! "You old scoundrel!"——

S U B T L E.

A very pompous beginning!

T R U M A N. [*Reads.*]

"If you do not immediately, on the receipt of this letter, deliver to the bearer the jewels which I pledged with you for an hundred guineas, of which I never received more than fifty, I swear by all that is most sacred to a man of honour, that I will beat thee to death the first moment I have the unhappiness to see thee. You know I am a person of my word. Think upon this, but be speedy in thy resolves; and, if they should be not to comply with what I here desire, send for a lawyer, and make thy will out of hand. However, I promise to pay thee the hundred pieces thou hast fleec'd me of, as soon as I am in cash. Thus much to the greatest of all rascals; the most execrable of usurers; and
" the

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“ the betrayer and fleecer of your ’s,
“ Clerimont.”

S U B T L E.

In troth this is a curious piece to keep by one.

T R U M A N.

In good earnest, my dear Subtle, this same epistle shews the writers brain to be a little turned.

S U B T L E.

Well, you see now if I was jesting with you.

T R U M A N.

Upon my word I begin to believe what you say.

S U B T L E.

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for your condescension.

T R U M A N.

Excuse my distrust, Subtle ; you know you have taken me in sometimes.

S U B T L E.

Why, sir, when you prided yourself upon your great discernment, I must own I took a pleasure in trying my skill upon you ; but put your confidence in me, and if ever I impose upon you in the least particular, hang me up for the greatest villain breathing.

T R U M A N.

Will you promise this seriously ?

S U B T L E.

Upon my faith and honour. Only trust me, and I will sooner die than deceive you.

T R U M A N.

Well, then, here it rests, let us act in concert ; and endeavour to save your master, if possible, from the dreadful precipice on which his follies have brought him ; but he must be led back by degrees, and without consulting his father, whose too
great

The REFORMED RAKE. 91

great tenderness would overthrow our whole scheme, and compleat the ruin of his son. Will you assist me in this laudable design?

S U B T L E.

With all my heart. You know I have some talents.

T R U M A N.

Yes, yes; when you have a mind to it, no one more.

S U B T L E.

Well, they are all at your service.

T R U M A N.

I take you at your word. Let us begin by this business of the jewels: and, in the first place, let me tell you that you will not be quite safe in being the bearer of this peremptory demand.

S U B T L E.

I am very sensible of that.

T R U M A N.

I'll take the business upon myself.

S U B T L E.

Faith you'll oblige me greatly. I am not very fond of meddling to my own detriment.

T R U M A N.

I'll go to this usurer, redeem the jewels, and give them to you to carry to your master, with whom you shall make your court, by telling him that you bully'd the old fellow out of them. I leave you alone to dress up a narrative of this dangerous and hazardous exploit.

S U B T L E.

You may; and if I fail, my name's not Subtle.

T R U M A N.

One thing I must observe to you, which is, that there is an absolute necessity for his being kept in
ignorance,

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ignorance, at least for some time, of the endeavours which are used to save him ; and I think you have too great a regard for your master to betray me.

S U B T L E.

You say true, sir ; I love him as dear as I do my own soul ; and in betraying you, I should betray him.

T R U M A N.

Spoke like a lad of understanding and integrity ; henceforward I shall repose an entire confidence in thee.

S U B T L E.

And let the use I make of it speak for me.

T R U M A N.

Fare thee well, I must now to Solomon's. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E V.

S U B T L E. [*Solus.*]

Well, I certainly must have one of the best hearts in the world, to renounce the pleasure of cheating this old fellow : While he distrusted me, I glory'd in making him sensible of the superiority of my genius, and revenging myself on him for his suspicions : but now I am determined to serve him faithfully, and sacrifice my talents and fame to the interest of my dear master. As to his father, it is different ; I will at least reserve to myself a power of vexing him for my amusement. And here he comes very opportunely.

S C E N E VI.

Enter W E A L T H Y.

W E A L T H Y.

Well, Subtle, what is my son doing ?

S U B T L E.

S U B T L E.

What he should not do.

W E A L T H Y.

How! in my house?

S U B T L E.

Lord, where is the house in which this is not done?

W E A L T H Y.

Why, as you say——But what new follies has my son committed?

S U B T L E.

Oh! they are out of number. I shall therefore confine myself to his last and greatest; that which surpasses all his former ones, and will strike you with amazement.

W E A L T H Y.

Good God! what can it be?

S U B T L E.

He is in love.

W E A L T H Y.

The devil take the fellow! I thought some dreadful accident had befallen him. Is this all? Go, go; I know my son too well to suppose him capable of being in love.

S U B T L E.

May be so; but I can assure you he is, and over head and ears too.

W E A L T H Y.

Indeed! and with whom?

S U B T L E.

The very lady you was wishing him to have for a wife.

W E A L T H Y.

Isabella?

S U B T L E.

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S U B T L E.

The same.

W E A L T H Y.

I can never believe it.

S U B T L E.

And yet it is as true, as that I am in love with her maid Lucy. Do you believe it now?

W E A L T H Y.

What have I to do with your amours, mr. rascal ! but as to my son——

S U B T L E.

Here she comes in propria personâ ; ask her yourself if your son is not in love with her mistress.

S C E N E VII.

Enter L U C Y.

L U C Y. [*Cuts'fying low to Wealthy.*]

Sir, your most obedient servant.

W E A L T H Y.

Is it you, mrs. Lucy?

L U C Y.

I believe so, sir.

W E A L T H Y.

Where is your mistress?

L U C Y,

In her chamber, sir ; very busy in receiving money.

W E A L T H Y.

In receiving money?

L U C Y.

Yes, sir ; your lawyer has just brought her five hundred pounds, and very civilly told us, that as he thought

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thought we were both very pretty, he would do our business for us out of hand. He came just as you went out to seek him. I assure you he is very much of a gentleman, for a lawyer.

WEALTHY.

I shall thank him for his civility. But to come to another point : tell me Lucy, is it true, that my son is in love with Isabella ?

LUCY.

Here is mr. Subtle, sir ; he knows those matters better than I.

SUBTLE.

You know, madam, what my master said to your mistress ; you was present at all that passed.

LUCY.

It is very true, sir ; but I looked upon it as a mere piece of gallantry ; a joke, and nothing more.

SUBTLE.

May be so, madam ; but permit me to assure you, that my master is neither a man of gallantry, nor a joker ;—and that his declaration was pure, simple, and sincere, as was that of your humble servant.

LUCY. [*Curt'ysing to Subtle.*]

Sir, you are pleased to flatter me.

SUBTLE. [*Bows to Lucy.*]

Madam, you will be pleased to believe me ?

LUCY.

But, sir !——

SUBTLE.

But madam !——

WEALTHY. [*In a Passion.*]

Zounds ! what a to-do is here with sir and madam, and madam and sir ! Truce with your compliments,

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ments, if you please: do you think I have nothing to do but to stand and listen to your impertinences?

S U B T L E.

Impertinences, fir! this lady is a stranger to any thing of the kind, fir.

L U C Y.

And so is mr. Subtle too, I assure you, fir; impertinences, indeed!

W E A L T H Y.

'Sdeath, are you at it again; no more of this stuff, I tell you, but let us come to the point. Do you hear, mrs. Abigail?

S U B T L E.

Zounds! Abigail!

W E A L T H Y.

Will you hold your tongue, mr. jackanapes.

L U C Y.

Jackanapes!

W E A L T H Y.

'Od's blood! I'll give a hearty box of the ear to the first of you that dare speak, without I ask you a question. [To Lucy.] Tell me, I say, has my son made a declaration of love to your mistress?

L U C Y.

In form.

S U B T L E.

Very true, indeed, fir; formaliter, as the Latin expresses it.

W E A L T H Y.

Hark'e, fir, if you speak Latin, or any other language, till you are spoken to, I'll break your bones.

S U B T L E.

Do you speak then, inadam; I shall have my turn it is to be hoped.

W E A L T H Y.

WEALTHY. [To Lucy.]

Answer me truly to what I have to ask you; and in as few words as possible. What does your mistress say to this declaration?

LUCY.

Nothing.

WEALTHY.

Has not she told you her sentiments upon that head?

LUCY.

No.

WEALTHY.

Is this the first time my son has declared his passion?

LUCY.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

Do you tell me the truth?

LUCY.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

Yes and no, no and yes. What can you answer only by monosyllables?

LUCY.

It is my way of answering, when I am afraid of over-talking people.

SUBTLE. [Laughing aside.]

A fine wench! she's worth her weight in gold.

WEALTHY.

What are you saying?

SUBTLE.

Nothing.

WEALTHY.

You are making a jest of me, I think.

SUBTLE.

No.

E

WEALTHY.

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WEALTHY.

Do you remember what I promised you just now?

SUBTLE.

Yes.

WEALTHY.

I shall make you laugh on the wrong side of your mouth.

SUBTLE.

Indeed!

WEALTHY. [*Going to strike him, he avoids the blow.*]

What you are the ape of this baggage?

SUBTLE.

I am no ape, sir; thank heaven I have the gift of originality.

WEALTHY.

Well then, mr. original, answer me seriously, and without that impudent grin upon your face, or I'll twist your head behind you, what is your opinion of this declaration of your master's? Am I to believe for a truth that he is in love? Speak without any saucy jesting or affectation of monosyllables; or——

SUBTLE. [*Drawing out his words.*]

Since you will have me speak, sir;—and give you a ca-te-go-ri-cal answer,—I must confess, that after the most mature con-fi-de-ra-tion, de-li-be-ra-tion, and men-ti-ver-sa-tion, on the unhappy si-tu-a-tion of mr. Cle-ri-mont Wealthy, your ho-nour's son, and my dear ho-nour-ed and re-ve-ren-ced master, I——

WEALTHY.

Speak a little faster, mr. rascal, if you please; or I shall quicken the pace of that impudent tongue of your's. I had rather be stunned with your volubility than plagued with this hesitation.

SUBTLE.

THE END.

S U B T L E.

Why,—fir,—as you seem to have a great an-ti-pa-ty to bre-vi-ty, I thought a little cir-cum-lo-cu-ti-on——

W E A L T H Y.

Lucy, fetch me a stick.

S U B T L E.

A stick! oh! this is not to be borne with any longer; you shall give me satisfaction for this insult, say I told you so. [*Runs off.*]

W E A L T H Y. [*Running after him.*]

Satisfaction! an abominable! insolent!—Come hither, rascal; come hither.

S C E N E VIII.

Enter W E A L T H Y.

W E A L T H Y.

Was ever such a villain! he has put me into a sweat from head to foot—Lucy!—

L U C Y.

You had better recover your breath a little: fir, pray take your own time, I am in no hurry.

W E A L T H Y.

What are you going to begin again?

L U C Y.

Not I, indeed;—but you put me in an ill humour.

W E A L T H Y.

Because I would have chastised that scoundrel, I suppose.

L U C Y.

To be sure.

E 2

W E A L T H Y.

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WEALTHY.

I would advise you to take care how you put me in a passion, or I shall send you out of doors.

LUCY.

What do I care ; I am going to pass the rest of my days in a convent.

WEALTHY.

A convent ! You don't seem to have a great deal of nun's flesh about you.

LUCY.

Be that as it may, my mistress and I must comfort each other as well as we can.

WEALTHY.

Your mistress and you ! Is your mistress going into a convent too ?

LUCY.

Yes, needs must when the devil drives ; and so I go to keep her company. She has just received her portion ; and she intends to dispose of her jewels to raise money to pay my entrance.

WEALTHY.

I'll have none of these ; doings I have other things in view for her. I propose that she shall assist me to reclaim my son from his extravagances.

LUCY.

That would be a difficult task.

WEALTHY.

Quite the contrary, if he is truly in love.

LUCY.

One would think he was ; for he was going to kill himself, to convince her of his passion.

WEALTHY.

To kill himself ! Was he in earnest ?

LUCY.

LUCY.

If not he is a great hypocrite ; for I am sure he frightened us both out of our wits.

WEALTHY.

Oh ! I'll answer for him he is no hypocrite.

LUCY.

Well, then, look carefully after him ; for he told us very seriously, that he had not four and twenty hours to live.

WEALTHY.

Good God ! what do I hear ? That cursed fellow, Truman, has always kept me from explaining myself ; his cruel prudence will drive me mad. You will see that he will be the cause of my losing my son, a son I love to distraction, and never dared to tell him so, for fear of offending that old fool. I'll go this moment and find out the poor child, and do every thing that he would have me.

LUCY.

Sir, I am but a giddy young girl ; yet I must confess I would act more prudently if I was in your place. Here you pass in the world for a person of great understanding ; and yet——

WEALTHY.

Well !

EVERY.

I dare not proceed, sir ; but you may guess what I was going to say.

WEALTHY.

You was going to say, I suppose, that, with all my boasted knowledge, I have not common sense ! Well, speak freely, I give you leave.

LUCY.

Indeed you have guessed at my meaning.

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W E A L T H Y.

And you are in the right; my love to my son has blinded my reason.

L U C Y.

If you would trust to me, I could extricate you out of this difficulty.

W E A L T H Y.

By what means?

L U C Y.

By means of my mistress; for you must know she is entirely governed by me——

W E A L T H Y.

So much the worse.

L U C Y.

Rather say so much the better. I am determined that she shall oblige Clerimont to return to reason, Love shall produce this miracle.

W E A L T H Y.

It will be a new one.

L U C Y.

But not the less real I assure you. Leave me to manage your bark, and my life for it I will bring you safe into port.

W E A L T H Y.

And if you succeed, I'll give you a handsome portion,

L U C Y.

Where are you to get it? are you not entirely ruined, beggared, as we may say?

W E A L T H Y.

Never trouble thyself about that. Between you and I, but be sure you are discreet, I am still rich enough, child, to make your fortune.——But do you

you think your mistress has any inclination for my son?

LUCY.

I can say nothing to that as yet; but whether she has or not, you may be assured that she has an heart susceptible of gratitude; and so love may be put out of the question.

WEALTHY.

My dear Lucy, you make me a happy man. I am resolved to continue to disguise my sentiments with regard to my son, till I find how your scheme succeeds.

LUCY.

You shall soon hear from me; and if I bring you good news, remember my portion.

WEALTHY.

To maintain you in a convent?

LUCY.

Hum! a spice of matrimony would not be amiss with it. But I must take my leave, I hear my mistress ring.

WEALTHY.

Success attend thee.

[Exeunt severally.]

END of the SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter SUBTLE, looking about in a fright.

SUBTLE.

LORD have merey on us, what can have become of him ! I have been seeking him all over the house, but he is no where to be found: Sure he can never have ventured out. Oh lord ! oh lord ! my dear master, where shall I look for you ? Perhaps you are in jail.

SCENE II.

Enter CLERIMONT hastily, in his night gown.

CLERIMONT.

Not so bad as that yet you see:

SUBTLE.

Good God ! in your night gown ! where the devil do you come from ?

CLERIMONT.

Out of my closet, where I had locked myself in: Why did you not knock at the door ?

SUBTLE.

I thought you had given me the slip, for you never used to shut yourself in. What was you doing alone ?

CLERIMONT.

I was settling my affairs.

SUBTLE.

S U B T L E.

Pshaw! stuff!

C L E R I M O N T.

When I had done, I packed up all my cloaths, except what you see me now wear.

S U B T L E.

Why, I thought you had only undressed yourself to be more at your ease.

C L E R I M O N T.

No, Subtle, I did it through necessity.

S U B T L E.

What do you say! Have you packed up the cloaths you wore to-day as well as the rest?

C L E R I M O N T.

I have, as knowing I should have no further occasion for them.

S U B T L E.

Lord! how you talk! But what have you done with your things?

C L E R I M O N T.

I have sold them.

S U B T L E.

Sold them! what, are they gone out of the house?

C L E R I M O N T.

Not yet; but I expect La Fleur to fetch them every minute.

S U B T L E.

La Fleur! Why, has he bought them?

C L E R I M O N T.

No; it is a cousin of his whom he recommended to me on this occasion.

S U B T L E.

Why, are you mad, to trust your cloaths to such a rascal as that! a fellow whose's father was hang'd,

and who is every day making interest for the gallows himself.

CLERIMONT.

You only abuse the fellow because you are jealous of him for having made a better bargain than you could have done.

SUBTLE.

Troth, my good master, you have been a dupe all your life, and a dupe you will continue.

CLERIMONT.

Truce with your compliments, if you please; you know they are such as I do not like.

SUBTLE.

Well; but pray tell me, what could induce you to strip yourself in this manner?

CLERIMONT.

To raise all the money I could, and punish myself for my folly. I am determin'd to convince my father, that however extravagant I may have been, I still retain a true sense of honour. Have you carried my letter to the old Jew?

SUBTLE.

What a question!

CLERIMONT.

Well, and what success? but I need not ask, there could be no hopes of any.

SUBTLE.

No hopes! There is reality however.

CLERIMONT.

Indeed!

SUBTLE.

Ecce signum. [*Shewing the jewels.*]

CLERIMONT.

You amaze me! if I was capable of tasting satisfaction in my present wretched condition, this would
overjoy

overjoy me, but pry'thee tell me, for I long to know, how did you manage matters?

S U B T L E. [*Aside.*]

Now, good invention stand by me.——Why fir, the instant I entered his office, he turn'd pale, and his knees knocked together, for you must know when I am in a passion, there is something dreadful in my looks.

C L E R I M O N T.

Troth, I never observed that.

S U B T L E.

May be so, because I restrain myself before you.

C L E R I M O N T.

It is very prudently done; but proceed.

S U B T L E.

When I saw him so frighten'd and confounded, I stept fiercely up to him, and with a loud and angry tone of voice. Here said I, mr. Whatdy'callum, put on your spectacles, and read this letter, and d'ye hear, consider well of the contents, they are very plain and need no interpretation.

C L E R I M O N T.

Bravo!

S U B T L E.

Upon this he took the letter, which he read twice over without saying a word, trembling all the while like a leaf. At length, in a very humble tone of voice, he entreated me to return you his most respectful compliments, and that he would certainly answer your letter to-morrow.

C L E R I M O N T.

Is this all?

S U B T L E.

Lord you are so hasty! All? no, nor the one half. Your answer this instant said I, raising my voice,

voice, I shall not leave you till I have it. My dear mr. Subtle, don't put yourself in a passion; I am going to write to your master—My master wants none of your writing, said I; comply immediately with what he orders there, and no more words. Zounds, sir! I am not to be trifled with, nor my master neither, so make haste said I, shaking my stick—The jewels, the jewels, quick! He attempted to call out for assistance; but I took him by the throat, and swore bloodily I would strangle him if he attempted to stir. In short, my prodigious valour terrified him to such a degree, that he went to his strong box, and gave me out the jewels; and, as he was putting them into my hand, he says, with a pitiful whine, but, my dear mr. Subtle, I hope I am not to lose the hundred guineas I lent your master upon them? No, you old rascal, said I; you shall be no loser by my master, I give you my word for it. Oh, Lord! said the old fellow, that's enough for me, my dear sir; mr Subtle's word is as good as the bank: I look upon my money as safe as if it was in my pocket. Upon this, turning my back upon him with an air of contempt, I flung out of the room; and here I am.

CLERIMONT.

I declare I never suspected you had so much courage, Subtle.

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, you don't know me! However, you may see how valuable the servant is, whose valour is equal to his fidelity.

CLERIMONT.

Well, I shall not forget your services; I will reward them as far as is in my power. But why have you always concealed this valour of yours from me?

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E. [*Taking snuff, and bowing in an affected manner.*]

Humph! —Why! —The truly brave are always modest.

C L E R I M O N T.

True; I did not think of that. But whom have we here?

S C E N E III.

Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.

L U C Y. [*Aside to Isabella, entering.*]

Do not let us seem to be seeking him, but only as if we met him by chance.

I S A B E L L A.

Come with me, Lucy; I shall soon be back. Have you ordered a coach?

L U C Y.

Yes, madam, there is one at the door — Gentlemen, your servant. This is a lucky meeting.

I S A B E L L A. [*To Clerimont.*]

Your servant, sir — Lord bless us! what a dress you are in?

C L E R I M O N T.

I am ashamed, madam, to appear before you in this manner — With your permission I'll retire, and —

I S A B E L L A.

No, no, pray stay; I shall dispense with ceremony.

L U C Y. [*To Subtle.*]

Was your master going to bed?

S U B T L E.

Yes; he found himself tired, and so —

LUCY.

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LUCY.

He was going to-bed at this time of day?

SUBTLE.

When one is not well, you know, one never minds the hour.

ISABELLA.

Pray what may his disorder be?

SUBTLE.

It lies in his head, madam.

CLERIMONT. *Afide to Subtle.*]

Hold your tongue, or——

LUCY.

Really the gentleman seems strangely altered.

ISABELLA.

You should take the air a little.

SUBTLE.

Oh, Lord! by no means, madam. My master cannot bear the air—His chamber is the most proper place for him.

LUCY.

Mr. Subtle, I find, is your physician, sir?

SUBTLE.

Oh yes; I sometimes purge him of his ill humours.

CLERIMONT. *[To Subtle, angrily.]*

Rascal! if the lady was not here——

LUCY.

Why, has this lady any power over you, sir?

CLERIMONT.

Ah, Lucy, she is mistress of my heart and soul.

ISABELLA.

Nothing but experience can convince me of that.

CLERIMONT.

The REFORMED RAKE. 111

CLERIMONT.

How, madam! did you not a while ago assure me you did not doubt my passion for you?

ISABELLA.

I might so; but such violent protestations, and coming from such a person as you, stand in need of strong confirmation.

CLERIMONT. [*Wildly.*]

'Tis well, madam! If nothing but my death will convince you of the truth of my declaration, I am ready——

ISABELLA.

Oh! no more of that, I beseech you: I assure you, sir, these are proofs that I have an aversion to. Besides, to deal plainly with you, I cannot bear this affected desperation; it is insufferable.

CLERIMONT.

By all that's sacred it is not affected.

ISABELLA.

Well, be it affected or real, it is my aversion. Good God! what should a young woman like me do with a whining, melancholly lover? You are fit only to give one the vapours. Is this a way of pleasing? I declare if you continue in this melancholly mood, I would prefer a convent a thousand times over to living with such a man. No, no, if you would have me believe you really love me, you must wear quite a different countenance, and let me see you gay and serene; I must absolutely have you dress your face in smiles.

SUBTLE. [*Taking his master by the hand, and singing and dancing.*]

Come, sir, pluck up your spirits! Tol, lol, tol, derol

CLERIMONT. [*Seizing him by the collar.*]

You dog! I know not what prevents me from——

ISABELLA.

Act 2 The GENEROUS ARTIFICE; Or,

ISABELLA.

Oh, I see the great power I have over you. Your servant, sir. This is the last time you shall ever see my face, I assure you. [Going.]

CLERIMONT

Dearest Isabella, excuse my rashness; you shall find me henceforward a different person.—Subtle, dear Subtle, intercede for me.

SUBTLE. [To Lucy, with an air of authority.]

Lucy, I command you, by your love to me, not to let your mistress depart.

LUCY.

Come, madam, let us be gone.

SUBTLE. [Holding her.]

Ah, tygres!

CLERIMONT. [To Isabella.]

If you leave the room, I will not survive your absence an instant.

ISABELLA.

What, threatening again!

CLERIMONT.

It is the last time, upon my honour.

ISABELLA.

Remember the oath you have now taken, and promise me to comply, without hesitation, with whatever I shall require of you.

CLERIMONT.

'Tis done; command, and I will obey.

ISABELLA.

Then listen to me attentively: from some expressions which dropt from you in our last conversation, both Lucy and myself have a suspicion that you meditated some fatal and cruel design upon your own life; and that

CLERIMONT.

CLERIMONT.

The REFORMED RAKE. 113

CLERIMONT.

What reason had you to suppose such a thing?

ISABELLA.

No interruption — I come now to the point. You say you are desirous to convince me of the sincerity of your passion; now, I require two proofs of it, without which all your protestations will go for nothing with me.

CLERIMONT.

Oh, name them! name them! and if man —

ISABELLA.

Soft! no-high flights, I beseech you! In the first place, you must give me your word and honour that you will get the better of your present despair (the reasons of which I will not inquire into too minutely) and lay aside every fatal design against your life.

CLERIMONT.

But, supposing I entertained such a design as you speak of; why should you wish me to live?

ISABELLA.

To love me.

CLERIMONT.

And is this absolutely your will?

ISABELLA.

Most absolutely.

CLERIMONT.

Then, I swear, by all that is sacred, to obey you.

ISABELLA.

'Tis well; but this is not all. I require, moreover, that you deliver me up all your arms, to remain with me so long as I shall think fit to keep them; and that you likewise give me your word
of.

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of honour, that you will not stir out of the house
till I give you leave.

CLERIMONT.

My word of honour! Well—I give it you—
Will this satisfy you?

ISABELLA.

No, not till you deliver me up your arms.

CLERIMONT,

Here, Subtle, take the key of my closet, and
bring out all the arms you find there, and lay
them at the feet of the lovely Isabella.

SUBTLE.

I'll empty the arsenal, I warrant me. [*Going,
returns.*] But, hold; is there no private hoard?

CLERIMONT.

None, upon my honour.

EUCY.

But have not you a little reserve of arsenic, or
some such pretty cordial for melancholly?

CLERIMONT.

I declare to you I never thought of any such
thing.

SUBTLE.

Well, then, I am gone, and will return in the
twinkling of an eye. [*Exit.*]

SCENE IV.

CLERIMONT.

Well, charming Isabella, are you not now con-
vinced, that you have an unbounded empire over
my heart?

ISABELLA.

To confess the truth, I do begin to believe you.

CLERI-

The REFORMED RAKE. 115

CLERIMONT.

Ah! could I but hope to be beloved by you, nothing would equal my happiness. May I? dare I entertain that pleasing hope?

ISABELLA.

The care I have taken of your life, may speak forme more than the warmest expressions.

CLERIMONT.

Subtle! make haste. How slow is that fellow in executing your orders! I'll go and hasten him.

LUCY.

I am pleased to see this impatience; but, stay, here he is.

SCENE V.

Enter SUBTLE. [*With a fowling-piece, a pair of pistols, a powder-horn, a bag of shot, a dagger, and a sword. He throws them all down at Isabella's feet.*]

SUBTLE. [*In a tragedy tone.*]

Thus, at your fair feet, Oh divine lady! I lay this sword, this dagger, these fire-arms, and all our warlike implements.

ISABELLA.

Are these all?

CLERIMONT.

If there is one thing wanting, load me with your hatred and contempt.

ISABELLA.

I am satisfy'd.

SUBTLE. [*Going up to Isabella, sings affectedly.*]

Triumph, triumph, queen of beauty!

CLERI-

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CLERIMONT. [*Pushing him away.*]

Away, you insolent rascal!

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, you have no taste for music.

LUCY.

Come, now it is my turn—Subtle, deliver me your sword.

CLERIMONT.

Oh, it is a harmless weapon.

LUCY.

In his hands it may; but it is too near for your's.

SUBTLE.

There, my adorable mistress, I deliver you a weapon, the terror of its foes.

LUCY.

Come, give it me.

SUBTLE.

On condition that you will promise to love me. This is the fine qua non.

LUCY.

The fine qua non! what language is that?

SUBTLE.

The language of love, my dear. [*Seeing Isabella going to take up the pistols.*] Stay, madam, to prevent any accidents, I will discharge them. Don't be frightened. [*He fires off the two pistols.*] There:

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

Enter WEALTHY. [Running in frightened. Clerimont, seeing him, retires.]

WEALTHY.

Good God! what noise is that I hear? Where is my son? Where is Clerimont? Two women with pistols in their hands! What is all this? Have you murdered my son among you?

LUCY.

Do not frighten yourself, sir; our weapons are not fatal ones.

WEALTHY.

But who was it fired the pistols?

SUBTLE.

Without vanity, I may say it was me.

WEALTHY.

And what the devil was it for?

SUBTLE.

Only rejoicings for a peace.

WEALTHY.

For a peace?

SUBTLE.

Yes, sir. A treaty of peace has just been concluded between this lady and your son. These two were mediatrixes, and love was guarantee. Do you understand me now?

WEALTHY.

Oh, perfectly. Inexorable Fruman! Oh, my dearest Isabella, how much am I obliged to you?

LUCY.

And have you nothing to say to me?

WEALTHY.

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W E A L T H Y.

Yes, Lucy, I will remember the portion I promised thee.

I S A B E L L A.

You have nothing more to apprehend on your son's account, mr. Wealthy. He has given me his word of honour, he will make no attempt against his life.

W E A L T H Y.

You revive me. I was in an horrible fright.

S C E N E VII.

Enter T R U M A N.

T R U M A N.

What is the matter, my dear friend? You seem strangely confus'd.

W E A L T H Y.

Oh, mr. Truman! if it had not been for this lady, I had lost my boy for ever.

T R U M A N.

Poor man! How can you be so alarmed at the rhodomontade of a young squire?

I S A B E L L A.

Upon my word, sir, the affair was very serious; and it would not be safe to drive him to despair again: and so, I'll leave you to consult together how to manage matters. [*Exeunt Isabella and*

Lucy, carrying the arms with them.]

S C E N E VIII.

W E A L T H Y. [*To Truman.*]

What would you advise me to do?

T R U M A N.

The REFORMED RAKE. 119

TRUMAN.

To continue resolute. If you should make any untimely concessions, your son is lost beyond redemption.

WEALTHY.

Hush! See who stands there.

SUBTLE.

What! do you distrust me? Nay, then, fare you well. [Going.]

WEALTHY.

Away with you.

TRUMAN.

No, no. Come back, Subtle—You injure him, mr. Wealthy. I would trust him as soon as myself.

SUBTLE.

You are quite in the right: if you did not, I would shew you a trick yet. But, whom have we here?

S C E N E IX.

Enter La FLEUR. [With a large trunk, followed by two men, carrying each another.]

SUBTLE. [To La Fleur,]

Where are you carrying these trunks, pray, mr. La Fleur?

LA FLEUR.

Why, my master told me, that he wanted to dispose of his wardrobe; and so, I promised him a hundred guineas on them, in the name of my cousin Remnant, who is a salesman, and one of the most responsible and fair-dealing men in his profession. My master was pleased with the bargain; and so I am going to carry the cloaths to my said cousin.

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E.

To your said cousin, ha! Come, come, gentry, discharge your shoulders of those trunks, if you please. To my said cousin! This catchpole rascal thinks he is serving a writ, I suppose, with his law-terms.

W E A L T H Y.

Ay ay, come, unburthen; or I will have you all three taken up for house-breakers.

[The two men throw down the trunks and run off; La Fleur remains.]

T R U M A N.

With your permission, honest mr. La Fleur, may I presume to ask, if your master has received the said hundred guineas?

L A F L E U R.

Not yet, sir. I promised to bring him the money as soon as I had delivered the goods.

T R U M A N, *[To Wealthy.]*

Your son is not very mistrustful, you see. Mr. La Fleur, you must give me leave to tell you, that you are a very great rascal, mr. La Fleur.

S U B T L E.

And the more so, as he knows the things he has bought to be worth ten times the money he was to give for them.

W E A L T H Y.

Lay hold of the villain.

T R U M A N.

No, no; satisfy yourself with turning him out of doors.

W E A L T H Y. *[Pushing out La Fleur.]*

Away, rascal; and get yourself hang'd elsewhere.

S C E N E

S C E N E X.

TRUMAN.

Now, Subtle, my good lad, you must tell your master a few more lies for us.

WEALTHY.

Oh, they cost him nothing, let them be ever so many, or so great.

SUBTLE.

Mr. Wealthy must always have a fling at me.

TRUMAN.

Never mind it; 'tis only the remains of an old humour.

WEALTHY.

But what could induce my son to part with his cloaths?

SUBTLE.

He did it in a fit of despair. He had a mind to raise a sum of money upon them and his jewels, which said sum, as La Fleur says, he intended to bequeath by will——

WEALTHY.

Was the poor creature going to make his will?
[Wiping his eyes.]

TRUMAN.

For heav'n's sake do not make yourself uneasy about such ridiculous stuff. You shall tell him, Subtle, that you have detain'd his trunks, having found a person, who will give twice the money for the cloaths that the former purchaser offered. His father shall give you the money, and keep the things. You see the confidence we put in you.

F

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E.

Hey day! One of the trunks is open—Let us see what is here. My God! was ever such heedlessness?

T R U M A N.

What is it?

S U B T L E.

He has left his pocket-book in the trunk.

T R U M A N. [*Snatching the pocket-book out of his band.*]
Let me see it.

S U B T L E.

For heav'n's sake do not open it; it is a magazine of follies.

T R U M A N.

They will serve to amuse us——But, now to the point. I tell you, my honest Subtle, that your master's debts are all paid. This has been done so privately, that he has not the least suspicion of it. Now, instead of putting him out of his pain, by acquainting him with this circumstance (as his too fond father here would rashly do) I am determined to make him believe he is more closely beset than ever. I have made half a dozen bailiffs pass before his windows, five or six times, on purpose that he might have a sight of them. This will prevent him from stirring out for a week at least.

S U B T L E.

Well! if it is so, I strike to you; and confess you outdo me in invention; for, i'faith, I was imposed upon as well as him. However, I am overjoy'd at what I hear.

W E A L T H Y. [*To Subtle.*]

Now, do not you go and overset all that has been done.

END OF

S U B T L E.

S U B T L E.

If I overfet any thing, hang me up. You shall find I will fecond all your endeavours moft heartily ; and divert myfelf, for a while, at the expence of this darling fon of your's.

TRUMAN.

Come then, let us in and confult upon our operations. [Exeunt.]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

TRUMAN and WEALTHY,
meeting SUBTLE.

TRUMAN.

WELL, Subtle, what news?

SUBTLE.

Very serious news, I assure you. My poor-master is so furiously in love, that not a creature can make him hearken to reason but myself.

TRUMAN.

So much the better.

SUBTLE.

Well now, with all your discernment and sagacity, I would ~~wager~~, you could not, for the soul of you, tell which was the most mad, my master or me. You might have heard our sighs all the house over.

TRUMAN.

How, Subtle! do you sigh too?

SUBTLE.

Oh Lord, sir, enough to choak me sometimes.

[*Fetching a deep sigh.*]

TRUMAN.

Well, for heaven's sake, make haste and have done; unless you would kill me with laughing.

SUBTLE.

The greatest men have their weaknesses. The coquetry of that slut Lucy has almost turned my brain.

TRUMAN.

TRUMAN.

Very moving indeed! But what hast thou got in thy hand?

SUBTLE.

Notes for a thousand pound.

WEALTHY.

What the devil! Does my son owe so much still?

SUBTLE.

On the contrary, so much is due to him.

TRUMAN.

To him?

SUBTLE.

Yes, sir. For, when he has cash, he keeps open purse. He makes no scruple of begging himself to support others; and, when he is in want, he borrows to support himself.

WEALTHY.

Generous soul!

SUBTLE.

Egregious dupe, you may rather say; but do not let us blame him for every thing. This money is what he won some time ago at play, upon credit; and debts of honour, you know, are always paid.

WEALTHY.

Well, I am glad to hear he has got a supply, however.

TRUMAN.

Come, this is a pretty considerable sum; and, together with the money that he will receive for his cloaths and jewels, which are worth, at least, eight hundred pounds, he will have near two thousand. Now, let us see what use he will make of such an unexpected supply: this is the great test I am waiting for.

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WEALTHY.

And that I dread. If this rascal, now, should betray us.

S U B T L E.

Rascal again! What, still mistrustful of me? If this is the case, do your business yourself; I wash my hands of you.

T R U M A N.

Be pacify'd, Subtle, and overlook an old habit.

S U B T L E.

Well; but let him alter it, or I shall take up my old habits too.

T R U M A N.

Heav'n's forbid! for that would defeat all our measures.

S U B T L E.

But let us return to what we were about——

T R U M A N.

Thus, then, the affair stands. You must carefully conceal from Clerimont that I have taken up his notes. Next, it is absolutely necessary that he should suppose the money he is about to receive is unknown to us: for, if he was to imagine, that either his father or I were acquainted with his receiving such a sum, he would not dare dispose of it at his own pleasure.

W E A L T H Y.

An excellent thought! Subtle, my dear boy, you must help us out in this ticklish affair.

S U B T L E.

Oh ho! 'tis my dear Subtle, and my dear boy, now you stand in need of my assistance.

T R U M A N.

No heartburnings, Subtle. Remember, that in serving us, you the better serve your master.

S U B T L E.

S U B T L E.

Well, I am really ashamed of my good nature; but it is the weakness of all generous minds.

W E A L T H Y. [*Aside.*]

Impudent rascal!

S U B T L E. [*To Truman.*]

One word more of explanation. If you are desirous that he should be entirely ignorant of what you do for him, I must take all the merit upon myself.

T R U M A N.

Undoubtedly. Take all the merit of this affair, as thou didst that of the jewels, which was an admirable story. I'll go and get the money ready, and then we'll consider of the proper time to produce it. Consider only, that thou wilt gain more by continuing to impose upon your master, than by betraying us to him. And, indeed, that it will be rather serving than deceiving him.

W E A L T H Y.

Be but true to us, and I promise thee a reward for thy fidelity.

S U B T L E.

Well, it must cost me some few lies: but what will not one undergo for one's friend?

W E A L T H Y. [*Pulling off his hat, and making him a low bow.*]

Dear sir, you do me prodigious honour!

T R U M A N.

What other papers are those you have there?

S U B T L E.

These are letters of credit, by which I am empowered to receive and pay money in my master's name.

T R U M A N.

TRUMAN.

You may as well leave them with me. But here comes Lucy : we'll leave you together.

[*Exeunt Truman and Worthy.*]

S C E N E III.

Enter L U C Y.

S U B T L E.

What a bewitching eye she has ! and then, such a shape ! Odsso, I believe this baggage will turn my brain.

L U C Y.

Your servant, mr. Subtle. What ! meditating alone ?

S U B T L E.

Yes, madam, I was meditating on your charms, which I die with impatience to possess. Come, my dear Lucy, let us e'en conclude this matter : When shall we be marry'd, hey ?

L U C Y.

A very pretty beginning for a polite lover, indeed !

S U B T L E.

Why, what greater compliment can be paid a pretty young girl, than to shew an earnest desire of being join'd to her for life ?

L U C Y.

Psha ! you blockhead ! do not you know I am going into a convent ? I am resolv'd never to leave my mistress. I will share her fate.

S U B T L E.

So you persist in that resolution, both of you, hey ?

L U C Y.

LUCY.

Hum!—I believe we do.

SUBTLE.

Restore our arms then, cruel as thou art!

LUCY.

Your arms! for what?

SUBTLE.

That we may kill ourselves in earnest.

LUCY.

Nay, if you are resolved, I'll step in and fetch you your sword.

SUBTLE.

No, you may as well keep it. I might miss my heart, perhaps, for my hand is very unsteady. I think it will be better to dispatch myself with a pistol; it is the surest way.

LUCY.

Well, then, I'll lend you your master's, rather than you should want.

SUBTLE.

The offer is kind and passionate, and you smile when you make it. However, say what you will, I'm sure you love me. Come, I'll answer for thee, to save thee the pain of a declaration. Lay your hand upon your heart and tell me if I lye.

LUCY.

Pr'ythee be quiet, and let me go about my lady's business.

SUBTLE.

Whither, in such haste, pray?

LUCY.

To your master.

E 5

SUBTLE]

S U B T L E.

To my master, and from your mistress! pretty forward, that! And, pray, what may your message be?

L U C Y.

That, I have orders to deliver only to himself.

S U B T L E.

Indeed! But he is in his night-gown still. Do you think you can venture yourself with him, without hurting your modesty?

L U C Y. [*Smiling.*]

My modesty? Why, you are jealous, Subtle.

S U B T L E.

Jealous of decency; as for the rest, I am secure.

L U C Y.

And you are in the right. Your master is so mopish, that there is not the least danger of him.

S U B T L E.

Igad I would not care to trust him too far: for that roguish look of thine is capable of bringing about strange revolutions.

L U C Y.

But, here he comes, just in the nick of time.

S U B T L E. [*Scratching his head.*]

Shall I retire?

L U C Y.

I think he looks more gay than usual; there is more fire in his eyes. What say you, Subtle?

S U B T L E.

Say? Why, I say, that to oblige you, I'll e'en say where I am.

S C E N E

S C E N E IV.

CLERIMONT. [*At the side of the stage.*]

CLERIMONT.

Subtle!

S U B T L E.

Sir.

CLERIMONT.

Is my father here?

S U B T L E.

No, all's safe, he is in his chamber with Mr. Truman; come forward, here is a person has something to say to you.

CLERIMONT.

Lucy! is it you? What procures me the pleasure of this visit?

L U C Y.

Sir, I am sent by my mistress.

CLERIMONT.

Sent by your mistress! to me?

L U C Y.

Most certainly, sir, it is not from myself.

CLERIMONT.

Well, and tell me, my dear girl, what are her commands?

L U C Y.

In the first place, she desires to know how your melancholly does.

CLERIMONT. [*Smiling.*]

My melancholly. Oh, it loses ground hourly; I feel its force diminish every moment.

L U C Y.

Good news! I am glad to hear it.

S U B T L E.

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S U B T L E. [*Afide to Lucy.*]

You see I was in the right to stay here.

C L E R I M O N T.

What are you saying to her?

S U B T L E.

Only a word or two about our own affairs.

C L E R I M O N T.

You take your time very prettily. [*To Lucy.*]
Have you any thing to say to me in private, Lucy?

S U B T L E.

Oh Lord, sir, no! I may stay: Have you any thing you would conceal from me?

C L E R I M O N T. [*Smiling.*]

Ah, ha! I understand you, Mr. Subtle!

S U B T L E.

What! you think I am inquisitive?

C L E R I M O N T.

Inquisitive; yes, yes, I know what you mean.
Well, Lucy.

L U C Y.

Well, sir, since you begin to smooch your brow a little, I shall go, and acquaint my mistress how I find matters. And now a word to you. My mistress acquaints you by me, that a female relation of hers is just arrived from Antwerp, who is one of the most ridiculous country dowdeys that ever set foot in Paris.

C L E R I M O N T.

I do not see how this can concern me.

L U C Y.

More than you imagine. You must know, this same country lady, who has never seen any thing in her life, is dying with impatience to go to an opera; which the poor soul imagines to be the eighth wonder of the world.

C L E R I M O N T.

CLERIMONT.

She'll find herself greatly deceiv'd. But proceed, for this can be nothing to me neither.

LUCY.

I beg your pardon, it can, and it is.

CLERIMONT. [*Impatiently.*]

As how?

LUCY.

You'll see. My mistress, who never goes to public places, is very much embarrassed by the curiosity of her cousin, who insists that she shall take her to this same opera.

CLERIMONT.

Why, your mistress has it in her power to refuse.

LUCY.

And so she did at first, but Mr. Wealthy desires she will comply, and then, you know, there can be no denial.

CLERIMONT.

That's true.

LUCY.

And what adds to the dilemma is, that she happens to be as little acquainted with the opera beings as her cousin, and shall not know how to behave, unless she has some one to keep her in countenance. She has desired your father to accompany her, but he has refused; she then asked Mr. Truman, who excused himself, and desired her to apply to you.

SUBTLE. [*Aside.*]

What a malicious old devil!

CLERIMONT.

To me? Apply to me to accompany her to the opera!

LUCY.

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LUCY.

Yes, and she desires as a favour that you will be ready in a couple of hours at farthest; so it is high time you began to dress yourself. You seem thoughtful.

SUBTLE.

My master is only thinking of what suit he shall put on; he has so many, that he is puzzled in his choice.

CLERIMONT. [*Aside to Subtle.*]

Hang dog, you know the contrary.

LUCY.

Sir, will you not give me an answer?

CLERIMONT.

I am thinking of one. ——— That cursed fellow Truman!

LUCY.

Well, your servant, sir. — I shall let my mistress know that you did not think it worth your while to return any answer.

CLERIMONT.

For heaven's sake, Lucy, what do you mean? I am at present — in a great dilemma — not knowing how — which — what cloaths I shall wear — for — to tell you the truth. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I shall go mad!

SUBTLE.

You may return back to your lady, mrs. Lucy, I will fix his resolution: and so you may e'en tell her without hesitation, that my master will wait on her at the time appointed.

LUCY.

Enough. Oh how delighted shall I be to see an opera! It is what I have longed for this many a-day!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

S C E N E V.

CLERIMONT.

'Sdeath, rascal, what promise is this you have made for me?

S U B T L E.

Why, it was necessary for me to make some answer, as you would not return any.

CLERIMONT.

But you know very well I am in no condition to go out.

S U B T L E.

That is no fault of mine. Why was you in such a hurry to sell your cloaths?

CLERIMONT.

What shall I do? I am in as much despair as ever!

S U B T L E.

But seriously speaking, my dear sir, are you really so passionately in love with Mrs. Isabella, as you pretend to be?

CLERIMONT.

In love with her! 'Sdeath, villain, I love her dearer than life; nor is it a passion of to-day: no, I have long burned in secret for her, but thought myself unworthy not only of attempting to gain her heart, but even to declare myself. Virtue, Subtle, commands respect, even from the greatest libertines; and must I now behold myself reduced to the necessity of refusing an act of common civility to the person for whom I have the greatest esteem! No, no, I can never support this disgrace.

S U B T L E.

Come, do not despair; as I knew La Fleur to be a great rascal, I prevented him from carrying away your trunks.

CLERIMONT.

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CLERIMONT.

Then I am saved once more.

SUBTLE.

And I have sold them to an honest dealer, who will give you double the sum La Fleur offered for them; and you will receive the money this very afternoon.

CLERIMONT.

But have you delivered them to him?

SUBTLE.

I could not do otherwise, my dear sir.

CLERIMONT.

Then I am ruin'd.

SUBTLE.

Not at all; I'll engage the money shall be forthcoming.

CLERIMONT.

But that will not procure me a suit time enough to go to the opera.

SUBTLE.

'Odso! I never thought of that.

CLERIMONT.

Wilt thou be for ever blundering, and I the occasion of it? Oh! there is nothing left but death!

SUBTLE.

Lord do not be in such a violent hurry about dying; I'll go and get fifty guineas of the money, and that will more than purchase a suit, and put money in your pocket for your expences.

CLERIMONT.

But if I had my pockets full of money, and all my cloaths, how could I venture to stir out? The house is beset with bailiffs. I should take a pleasure in

in braving those rascals, that is certain, and should not doubt laying half a dozen of them at my feet; but that would not do, for I might be overpowered by numbers, and obliged to yield at last. [*Pausing*] Subtle, run to Daredevil, and Jack Ramble, they are my friends, and two honest fellows, tell them I shall be glad if they would accompany me.

S U B T L E.

Lord! you will not want them.

C L E R I M O N T.

What do you mean?

S U B T L E.

I mean as I say. Shall not I be with you? or do you reckon me for no-body?

C L E R I M O N T.

Troth not much better.

S U B T L E.

How, sir, have you forgot the intrepid valour I displayed in the recovery of the jewels?

C L E R I M O N T.

That was something, indeed, but not an exploit great enough for me to rely upon your assistance in such an attempt as this.

S U B T L E. [*Setting his arms a-kimbo, and strutting up and down the stage.*]

Very well, sir! mighty well! You shall see; that's all; you shall see whether I will not escort you safe to the opera, and back again. I'll engage to dispatch six bailiffs to my own share. Six and six I think are twelve; add to these the wounded, and those that will run away, and then I think we shall have the field to ourselves.

C L E R I M O N T.

Come on then; I am determined; but I must own you surpise me greatly.

S U B T L E.

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S U B T L E.

And that surprise is offensive to my valour. Though I have the heart of a lion, yet I always consider, that a prudent man will never have recourse to force, till every other milder method fails. I have a notion of paying a visit to the four creditors, who have writs out against you, and endeavour to bring them to an agreement; and I flatter myself I shall be able to persuade the rascals to give you liberty to walk abroad for this one day at least.

C L E R I M O N T.

That would be a glorious feat indeed, but it appears to me almost impracticable.

S U B T L E.

I'll set about it, however, and be with you again in a little time.

C L E R I M O N T.

If you succeed, there is nothing that I will not do for thee.

S U B T L E.

Well, pacify yourself, I am as good at negotiating as at fighting.

C L E R I M O N T.

Run then, my good lad! run!

S U B T L E.

On the bats' wings will I fly. *[Exit singing.]*

C L E R I M O N T.

I never knew the merit of this fellow 'till now; I have had a thousand proofs of his zeal and affection for me, but that he should have courage enough to share danger with me, is what I could never have suspected.

S C E N E

S C E N E VI.

Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.

ISABELLA.

Quick, Lucy, quick, my cousin is waiting for me, and I must go and bring her hither.

LUCY.

Bless me! there is your lover stealing away.

ISABELLA. [*To Clerimont, who is stealing off.*]

Mr. Clerimont, mr. Clerimont, a word with you, if you please.

CLERIMONT. [*Half behind the scenes.*]

Permit me to retire, madam, I am quite ashamed to appear before you in this dishabille.

ISABELLA.

Truly I think you have reason. Is it thus you prepare to accompany me?

CLERIMONT. [*Returning.*]

I shall be dressed in half an hour at most, and we have two hours good yet.

ISABELLA.

But why so long in your night gown?

CLERIMONT.

Why, madam——because——I——Oh, I have my reasons for that.

ISABELLA.

And what may they be, pray? Are you ill?

CLERIMONT.

Oh no! I am infinitely better than I was——but——

ISABELLA.

But what?

CLERIMONT,

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CLERIMONT.

I have been writing all the morning — besides, I wait for Subtle's return, whom I have sent with a message.

ISABELLA.

Cannot you dress yourself without him?

CLERIMONT.

Oh! no, impossible.

LUCY.

But you may be getting your hair dress, sir, and that will save some time; for my lady is in a great hurry.

CLERIMONT.

'Odso! that's right. Madam will you permit me to retire and——

ISABELLA.

Yes, yes, pray do, and make haste, I desire you.

CLERIMONT.

Your commands cannot be too speedily executed.

[Runs off.]

S C E N E VII.

LUCY.

Well, madam, what say you? Methinks mr. Clerimont does not look amiss in an undress: his night-gown really becomes him.

ISABELLA.

True, Lucy; but there is a certain melancholly hangs about him, still that makes me very uneasy.

LUCY.

Makes you uneasy, you say?

ISABELLA.

Yes, I must confess it raises my pity.

LUCY.

LUCY.

Uneasiness and pity! well, love is not far off then.

I'S A B E L L A

Peace, mad-cap ; here is the old gentleman.

S C E N E V I I I.

Enter WEALTHY.

WEALTHY.

Well, my dear Isabella, have you found a gentleman to gallant you to the opera?

L U C Y.

Yes, sir; we have provided one who will be very agreeable company.

WEALTH

But it is necessary I should know who he is.

ISABELLA.

A very agreeable gentleman, I assure you, sir.

14 C.Y.

And one we like very much? I assure you, sir,

Y S A B E L L E

Silence, Lucy! *THE NEW YORK TIMES*

WEALTHY

And pray what may be the name of this very
mercable and very much liked gentleman?

Γ' Σ' Α' Β' Ε' Λ' Ε' Α'

It will be sufficient, I fancy, to tell you, Sir, that he is the son of the man in the world to whom I owe the greatest gratitude and respect.

E·U·C·Y.

Nay, now, mr. Wealthy will never be able to guess.

LEI E H A & C

[illegible]

WHAT?—

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WEALTHY.

Has my son engaged to accompany you?

ISABELLA.

At least he has promised Lucy as much, whom I sent to him with my request.

WEALTHY. [*Aside.*]

That rascal, Subtle, has betray'd us; I knew it would be so. But pray tell me, Lucy, did he not make some hesitation in complying?

LUCY.

Oh! yes; he would even have sent me away without an answer, had not his man Subtle undertaken to answer for him.

WEALTHY. [*Aside.*]

Subtle is an honest fellow; I was mistaken.

LUCY.

I never saw a man so embarrassed in my life.

WEALTHY.

Indeed! I am heartily glad of it.

ISABELLA.

How, sir! glad of it? Why so, pray?

WEALTHY.

Oh! I have my reasons.

ISABELLA.

Bless me! what do I hear? Nay, then, I am resolved he shall not go with me. Lucy, run and tell Mr. Clerimont that I will not go to the opera. — You laugh, sir!

WEALTHY.

But you do not, I think; your eyes seem to sparkle with rage.

ISABELLA.

I must confess I expected a little more civility from your son.

LUCY.

LUCY.

I imagined his behaviour would cause your resentment, and therefore concealed it from you.

WEALTHY.

For fear you should not go to the opera, I suppose.

LUCY.

It was so, indeed.

WEALTHY.

A mighty pretty amusement for people who are going into a convent! Hark'e, Isabella, I desire you will moderate your resentment; my son is not guilty of the least want of respect to you; and I could excuse this behaviour of his from very sufficient reasons.

ISABELLA.

I should be glad to know them, sir; and I could readily forgive him.

WEALTHY. [*Smiling.*]

I fancy you could. However, I will explain myself more at large another time; at present, I shall content myself with assuring you, that you condemned him unjustly.

ISABELLA.

You assure me of that?

WEALTHY.

I do very seriously.

ISABELLA.

I believe you, sir; and am as seriously pleased at it.

LUCY.

I will lay a wager I can guess at the reasons Mr. Wealthy mentions. I have heard Mr. Truman say, that Mr. Clerimont is over head and ears in debt, and persecuted by his creditors. Now to me
the

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the poor young gentleman has all the appearance of being afflicted with a malady called confinement per force.

WEALTHY.

Troth, Lucy has gueſt the reaſon; he dare not ſtir out of doors for fear of being arreſted.

I SABELLA.

And can you, ſir, know this, and not take pity on him? How can you ſuffer him to remain in ſo cruel a ſituation?

WEALTHY.

He deſerves nothing better from me.

I SABELLA.

Alas! he has ſmarted but too deeply for his errors; your cruelty drove him to deſpair; and permit me to ſay that, but for me, you would not now have had a ſon. I have ſeen into the bottom of his ſoul; he was weary of life only becauſe he had loſt your affection. Tho' he may have incurred your juſt reſentment by his conduct, yet the ſincerity of his repentance as ſurely merits your forgiveness. You are too tender a parent, and he too good a ſon, for you to continue long ſeparate. Let me therefore on my knees implore you to take him again into favour. I aſk it becauſe I am ſatisfied he is worthy of it; and that very thing concurs to favour my petition.

WEALTHY. [*Wiping his eyes.*]

Riſe, my dear Iſabella, would Truman were ſeen!

I SABELLA.

Alas! can you not indulge a father's tendereſs without his permiſſion?

WEALTHY.
and

WEALTHY.

No, I cannot; that devil of a man is master of all my sentiments: besides, I have entered into certain measures with him, which I cannot break without imprudence.

ISABELLA.

Ah, sir!—

WEALTHY.

Do not take advantage of my weakness, good girl! let us drop this subject.—You think then, that my son has a passion for you?

ISABELLA.

I should be very blameable to doubt it, after the sacrifice he has made me.

WEALTHY.

Come, Isabella, open your whole heart to me.

LUCY.

Do, dear madam! courage!

WEALTHY.

Do you love him in return?

ISABELLA.

Sir——

LUCY.

I'll take upon me to answer for my mistress. —
Yes——

WEALTHY.

You blush, Isabella, and are silent! This is the very reply I could wish. But are you really sufficiently persuaded of his repentance to venture upon him for a husband?

ISABELLA.

If I was worthy to be mr. Clerimont's wife, sir, I should not make the least hesitation.

G

LUCY.

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LUCY.

Nor I neither, by my faith.

ISABELLA.

But alas! fortune has treated me so ill, that—

WEALTHY.

Come, come, despair of nothing; I flatter myself that the world will in you see an example, that heaven, sooner or later, always rewards prudence and virtue.

[*Exeunt.*]

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

TRUMAN *and* SUBTLE.

SUBTLE.

WELL, sir; you have had above an hour's private conversation with my master; are you not now fully convinced of my discretion and fidelity?

TRUMAN.

I am perfectly convinced, Subtle, that thou art a lad of honour; and that so far from having betray'd any of our schemes to thy master, he has not the least suspicion of the means his father and I have used to snatch him from the precipice to which his irregularities had hurry'd him. I am perfectly acquainted with his heart, I find it is incapable of dissimulation or restraint: and, I may venture to say, that I have too much discernment to let him impose upon me, had he attempted it. He is in such a dreadful uncertainty, so distracted between remorse, shame, and apprehension, that I must confess my heart bleeds for him, as I am certain that of my good old friend's will likewise. In short, I think, it is high time to deliver poor Clerimont from his present unhappy situation; and put it in his power to give us undoubted proofs of the sincerity of his repentance, and his return to wisdom and prudence.

G 2

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E.

To say the truth, I would not swear for him yet; I am now preparing a sharp trial for him; and poor young man he is very prone to fall. If unhappily he should take another flight, and ever come to the knowledge of my having acted, in concert with you and his father, to put this trick upon him, he would most certainly put me to death.

T R U M A N.

Make yourself easy, Subtle, and depend upon my honour that you shall come to no harm. But how do you propose to begin your plan of operations?

S U B T L E.

By presenting him the letter of licence from his four persecuting creditors, which I have just got them to sign: and as he is very well acquainted with their hands, he will readily believe himself in safety for this day.

T R U M A N.

But where is this letter of licence?

S U B T L E.

Here it is, and I believe according to form; for I drew it up myself.

T R U M A N.

Give it me. [*Reading to himself, and smiles.*] It is a droll piece, and entirely suitable to the genius of the composer.

S U B T L E.

Do you approve of it?

T R U M A N.

I think it a little upon the ridiculous; but the stile is so easy and natural, that your master, who is far from being of a distrustful temper, will easily believe it authentic.

S U B T L E.

S U B T L E.

Yes, yes, I am pretty safe in that respect; therefore as soon as he thinks himself at liberty to go out, be you ready to second me.

T R U M A N.

That I can easily do; for we can overhear every thing that passes between him and you, provided you converse in this room.

S U B T L E.

Oh! the scene shall pass here I promise you; I'll draw him this way without appearing to intend it.

T R U M A N.

Right; then Mr Wealthy and I, and perhaps Isabella too. (For I think it is proper he should be of the party) will hide ourselves behind the screen in the next room; so that we shall not lose a word of what passes, and be ready to shew ourselves at a proper time.

S U B T L E.

Nothing can be better concerted. Have you the monies ready?

T R U M A N.

Ready to produce whenever you think proper.

S U B T L E.

Tell the porter to come in at the great door as soon as he hears me sneeze, that shall be the signal.

T R U M A N.

Very well, I'll take care to give him his cue.

S U B T L E.

And Tom is to bring the cloaths whenever you think it necessary.

T R U M A N.

Let me alone to manage, my boy! all shall go right.

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S U B T L E.

Well then, the play will open immediately, and it will be a very interesting one for Mrs. Isabella. Be sure to have her so placed that she may not lose a single word.

T R U M A N.

I will; and do you, on your part, take care to manage matters so with thy master, that he may unbosom his whole soul.

S U B T L E.

Rely upon my skill, you shall see his heart as plain as if it was before you.

T R U M A N.

Heaven send us success! But retire, lest he should come unawares and surprise us together.

S U B T L E.

I'll vanish; but now I think of it, have you put his pocket-book into the coat which is to be brought him?

T R U M A N.

I have, and he will find the contents very different from those he left in it. How great will be his surprise!

S U B T L E.

That will be the unravelling of the piece which is to decide every thing.

T R U M A N.

And I assure you I, as well as his father, wait for it with the greatest impatience. As to thee, my honest Subtle, rest assured that we will put thee in a condition to make Lucy thy wife.

S U B T L E.

Ah! Sir; after so generous a promise I would cheat myself to do you a service. But I hear a noise!

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noise! [*Looking out*]. As I live it is my master coming this way.——Decamp from hence this moment, and go and place yourselves ready, I'll answer for it you shall have diversion enough.

TRUMAN.

Well, I am gone; but be sure you remember, Subtle, that on the conducting of this interview depends——

SUBTLE.

Good Lord! do you think I do not know what I am about? Away with you, I say. [*Pushing out Truman*].

S C E N E II.

SUBTLE. [*Solus*].

Well, friend Subtle, now it is your time to display the whole of that art for which you are so justly famed, in order to amuse the auditors. But faith, the nearer the catastrophe approaches, the greater apprehensions I am under. If my hair-brain'd master, when he finds himself at liberty, and wallowing in gold and silver, should break loose again, in good faith I may have reason to repent of having engaged in this scheme: but then, on the other hand, if I should be the means of reclaiming him, what joy will it give his father! and what honour will it gain me! Encouraged by this hope, I'll set to work heartily, and——But here comes our young spark. Now heaven send us well over it!

S C E N E III.

Enter CLERIMONT.

CLERIMONT.

Subtle, where have you been? Why did you leave me so long alone?

G 4

SUBTLE.

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SUBTLE.

Why, I had a mind to stretch my legs a little in this room; it is larger, and more airy than your chamber; let us walk and talk here.

CLERIMONT.

But are you sure that my father will not come in upon us?

SUBTLE.

No, no; he's gone out with Mr. Truman, and they will not return till night, so that we may have our full swing.

CLERIMONT.

Shall I be able to go to the opera, think you?

SUBTLE.

Make yourself easy upon that head.

CLERIMONT.

But my cloaths are not come.

SUBTLE.

You'll have them you may depend upon it; besides, you have time enough before you.

CLERIMONT.

True; but if I was dress'd I would go to Isabella's apartment.

SUBTLE.

Lord help you, my dear sir, if you was dress'd like a prince, I'll answer for her she would not receive you; consider you are too agreeable and too rakish to be admitted like an indifferent person.

CLERIMONT.

And yet I should wish to stand in that light with Isabella, for I respect her as much as I love her.

SUBTLE.

Egad she'd shut the door in your face: you know what sort of a temper her's is; and I can assure you

you her maid Lucy is not a whit more complaisant than her mistress; faith they are just fit for each other.

CLERIMONT.

I fancy, Subtle, if ever Lucy is thine, she must take great care of her behaviour, for you would be plaguy mistrustful.

SUBTLE.

Well, well, sir; we shall see how you will manage with a wife.

CLERIMONT.

Troth, Subtle, she will be an excellent one I believe; for I do not think I shall ever be marry'd.

SUBTLE.

Never be marry'd! Why are not you always declaring that you adore Isabella?

CLERIMONT.

And for that very reason I would not marry her.

SUBTLE.

A very extraordinary proof of your love, indeed!

CLERIMONT.

The most noble I can give her. What! shall I have the inhumanity to render her miserable only for the sake of gratifying my own passion? I love her to distraction, I must confess; but then it is with an honourable love. What a lot must be her's if she had me for a husband? I am worse than a beggar; she without any fortune, or even the most distant hopes of having one. Good God! what must become of us both? Would the warmth of my passion make her amends for the ruin I should bring upon her? No; let me rather suffer a thousand deaths than be the author of her unhappiness. I swear to thee, Subtle, that I would rather see her

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shut up in a convent for life, than make her the scorn or pity of the world. But alas! have I not already ruined the best of fathers by my fatal extravagance? A father that doated on me to excess! Dreadful thought! a parent ruined, and by my folly! Oh I cannot support the reflection!

S U B T L E.

Lord have mercy on us! you weep.

C L E R I M O N T.

Yes, Subtle, I at once weep and blush.

S U B T L E.

Well, you surprize me, [*Coughs three times.*] huh! huh! huh!

C L E R I M O N T.

My tears are the tears of rage and grief: grief to think of what my father has suffered, and rage against myself. By all that's sacred, if it was not for the love I bear to Isabel, I would not support life another day!

S U B T L E. [*Coughing again.*]

This is a good opening.

C L E R I M O N T.

What is a good opening?

S U B T L E.

Your present contrition.

C L E R I M O N T.

What avails contrition when it comes too late? My errors have been too numerous ever to be repaired.

S U B T L E.

Come, fir, take courage; perhaps the old gentleman is not so obdurate as he would make you believe.

C L E R I M O N T.

CLERIMONT.

Oh! Subtle, I know him better than you do; notwithstanding the reasons he has to be irritated against me; notwithstanding I have rendered myself so unworthy of his tenderness, yet I am certain that if it was in his power, he would still exert himself to the utmost for my relief. I have repeatedly experienced his bounties, and have as repeatedly abused them. Come hither, Subtle, listen to what I am now about to say to thee. My only wish is, to be able to repair my father's shattered fortune, and that moment to put an end to my being.

SUBTLE. [*Coughing louder than before.*]

Mark that!

CLERIMONT.

What do you mean?

SUBTLE.

Why, I was saying to myself that your words deserve to be written in letters of gold. Upon my soul, sir, you draw tears from my eyes too. Well, let the world say what they please, you have certainly a good heart. Permit me to embrace you, my dear master! never did man better deserve to have his liberty.

CLERIMONT.

Have you any hopes then of succeeding in your negotiation?

SUBTLE.

Ay, more than hope; I am certain of it.

CLERIMONT.

What do you tell me? May I then flatter myself?

SUBTLE. [*Pulling out a paper.*]

Read, judge, and rejoice!

CLERIMONT.

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CLERIMONT.

What paper is that?

SUBTLE.

It is a letter of licence from your four creditors, who had actions against you. I have read them such a lecture, that they have agreed to all we have desired of them.

CLERIMONT.

Let me see it. [*Reading.*]

SUBTLE.

Well, what say you now?

CLERIMONT.

There is no trusting to this; it has all the air of a joke.

SUBTLE.

A joke? good that! Do not you know the handwriting of those who have signed it?

CLERIMONT.

Yes, yes, I know their writing; but the style—

SUBTLE.

Oh! it was drawn up by Mr. Selvedge, who, I assure you, looked upon it as a masterly piece; and, as well as the others, signed it without any reserve or subterfuge whatever. Do you imagine that I would expose you to danger for the sake of diverting myself? You doubt me, I find, sir; I would sooner hazard my own life for your safety.

CLERIMONT.

I did not think of that; but notwithstanding this licence, we must find some means of satisfying the officers.

SUBTLE.

Oh, I have taken care to furnish them with duplicates of it.

CLERIMONT.

CLERIMONT.

My dear lad, let me embrace thee, thou art the nonpareil of serving men.

SUBTLE.

Why, without vanity, I think I may say you do me no more than justice: I always love people should save me the pain of speaking my own praises.

CLERIMONT.

But are you very sure this is not designed as a trap to get me out of the house, and shew—

SUBTLE.

Why do you think me such an ass, to be imposed upon in that manner? No, no, I'll answer for them with my life; at the worst, you know you have me for your friend. 'Egad I am almost sorry they came to this agreement, as it has prevented me taking my revenge on those rascally bailiffs.

CLERIMONT.

Methinks your courage goes even to rashness, Subtle! Why did I not know thee better before? We should have achiev'd some glorious feats together.

SUBTLE.

That we should, I promise you.

[Coughs three times.]

CLERIMONT.

What is the matter with thee?

SUBTLE.

I have got a devilish cold in running about for you.

[Sneezes two or three times.]

CLERIMONT.

'Zounds! your cold has come on very suddenly!

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E.

It is with over-heating myself in search of money.
[Squeezes again]

C L E R I M O N T.

Nay, for heaven's sake give over all this coughing
and sneezing.

S U B T L E. [Raising his voice.]

Oh I shall never give over till I see the money.
'Egad here it is.

S C E N E IV.

Enter a Porter with several Bags

P O R T E R.

A curse upon the fellow that loaded me in this
manner like a pack-horse! I believe I have been
half Paris over, before I could find out this plaguy
house too. Gentlemen, be so obliging to ease me
a little of my load, for I am not able to carry it
any longer.

C L E R I M O N T.

What have you got there, friend?

P O R T E R.

Money, I think they say; but o' my conscience
it is as heavy as lead.

C L E R I M O N T.

Is it for me?

P O R T E R.

To be sure it is. You are young mr. Wealthy,
an't you?

C L E R I M O N T.

The same.

P O R T E R.

I am glad I have found you.

C L E R I M O N T.

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CLERIMONT.

And so am I too, I assure you. But who sent you with this?

PORTER.

A devil of a fellow that lives at one end of the world, and has sent me to the other. Is not this a direction to you?

CLERIMONT.

It is, you are quite right. Pray do you know the very civil gentleman who sent you on this message to me?

SUBTLE.

It is an acquaintance of mine, whom I happened to meet with in my way, and as I had your notes about me, which you had received for gaming debts, I e'en shewed them to him, and asked him if he could raise me a little money upon them. Hum! says he, putting on his spectacles, and looking on them, do you know the parties? Are you willing to endorse them? With all my heart, reply'd L. Mighty well, said he, your name to it is as good as government security; I'll get the money for you immediately. As this man is honesty itself, I very readily accepted of his offer; and finding him in a humour to serve me, I e'en proposed to him the purchasing of your cloaths, and—

CLERIMONT.

Oh, ho, so then this is the same man that you was speaking to me of?

SUBTLE.

The same; and as a proof of his integrity, he offered me upon the spot twice the money for the cloaths, that the other rascal did to whom you would have sold them.

CLERIMONT.

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CLERIMONT:

What a happy chance! Sure this is a friend not to be paralleled.

SUBTLE.

Not in this wicked world, indeed. I positively do not know his equal, unless it is myself.

CLERIMONT.

Well observ'd, honest Subtle. How shall I ever be able to repay the services thou hast done me?

PORTER:

Faith, gentlemen, you talk here very much at your ease, and never think that I am ready to drop under my burthen.

SUBTLE.

'Odso! let us ease this poor devil of his load.

CLERIMONT.

With all my heart.—Here, my lad, is something for thee to drink.

PORTER.

Gentlemen, I return you many thanks, I am now as light as a feather, and can jump like a grasshopper.

[Exit Porter.]

S C E N E V.

SUBTLE.

Come now let us reckon the bags. One, two, three, four, five, and six: an hundred pounds each; these contain the money for your cloaths. Now for the rest: Here are twelve more of an hundred and fifty each, and a small one of fifty; this is the money for your notes.

CLERIMONT.

Good God, what a sum of ready money is here all on a sudden! Well, I hope fortune is at length weary

weary of persecuting me; and here is enough to indulge myself to the height of my wishes, if I was so disposed.

S U B T L E.

Bravo! my dear master, Bravo! Let us indulge ourselves. Sing old Rose and burn the Bellows. We may now take our swing of pleasure, to repay us for all our past sufferings. A little ready money for the present, will stop your creditors mouths, and we may enjoy the rest. What says my Cresus, my emperor of a master!

C L E R I M O N T.

And is this the advice you give me?

S U B T L E.

Is it not what you like?

C L E R I M O N T.

Like? infamous wretch! Know that my misfortunes have taught me wisdom; they have restored me to my reason, and I thank heaven I can now at once detest my past follies, and thy poisonous councils.

S U B T L E.

My God! are you in earnest?

C L E R I M O N T.

In earnest! I know not what prevents me from giving thee a convincing proof of it; and was it not for the remembrance of some services thou hast done me, I would drive thee from my presence this instant.

S U B T L E. [*Coughing vehemently.*]

Ay, here is my cursed cough come again! Well, sir, since you are so greatly reformed, I am very willing to follow your example: we will henceforward live the lives of hermits; however in the mean time I'll take these bags up into your chamber.

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chamber, that you may dispose of them in the most moral manner you may think proper.

CLERIMONT.

Take these bags, and carry them to my father's room, that he may find them there at his return; it is the least restitution I can make him for the immense trouble and expence I have cost him. This supply, small as it is, may perhaps minister to his present wants.

SUBTLE.

Mighty well ——— but pray how are you and I to live?

CLERIMONT.

By the crumbs that fall from his table, if he should not think me worthy of a place there.

SUBTLE.

But again, how will you satisfy those four creditors of your's, who have each an action against you? You will not be able to stir over the threshold.

CLERIMONT.

Well, then I will keep my chamber, and amuse myself with books: reading is the cordial of the wretched.

SUBTLE.

Very true, but let us read romances then. I protest you amaze me. [*Here he sneezes very loud.*]

CLERIMONT.

What, at it again?

SUBTLE.

Lord, sir, your moralizing has got up into my head.

CLERIMONT.

I hear some one coming; see who it is. It may be my father.

[*Going.*]

SUBTLE.

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S U B T L E.

No, no, come back, it is only Tom.

S C E N E VI.

Enter a FOOTMAN.

S U B T L E.

Well, Tom, what have you got there?

T O M.

A suit of cloaths for mr. Clermont.

C L E R M O N T.

Whence had you them?

T O M.

They were given me fir, to deliver to you.

C L E R M O N T.

By whom?

T O M.

By one mr. ——— mr. ——— upon my soul I have forgot his name now.

S U B T L E.

Lord bless me, it is my friend that I was speaking of to you, fir! ——— This is a piece of gallantry of his.

C L E R M O N T.

For which I am obliged to you, I dare say.

S U B T L E.

And for much more than you know. Come, come dress yourself quick.

C L E R M O N T.

Now I shall be compleatly happy.

S U B T L E.

You say truer than you imagine. You may go, Tom. *[Exit Footman.]*

S C E N E.

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S C E N E VII.

CLERIMONT. [*Putting on the cleatbs.*]

Now, my dear Isabella, I shall be able to obey your charming summons——blest chance!——But what is this in the pocket?

SUBTLE. [*Smiling.*]

Nay, look at it.

CLERIMONT.

By all that's good, my pocket-book! How the devil came it here?

SUBTLE.

You put it there yourself, I suppose.

CLERIMONT.

I did so, I remember it now.——Well, faith I am a very heedless fellow.

SUBTLE.

An oracle could not speak more true. If any one has opened it, they will have found some very edifying anecdotes.

CLERIMONT. [*Opening his pocket-book.*]

I must burn all these papers.

SUBTLE.

That would be a pity——however, before you condemn them to the flames, read them once more over.

CLERIMONT. [*Examining the Papers.*]

Good God, what do I see! These are not letters.——Hum——A discharge from Tinsel! Ditto, from Ragout! Ditto, from Selvedge, and ditto from Fashion. Can I believe my eyes! By all that's good here are others too from every one of my creditors

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editors without exception. Is this a dream, or is it reality? My dear Subtle, tell me whether am I waking or sleeping?

S U B T L E.

Faith if you are asleep, I am so too, for I see the same things as you do.

C L E R I M O N T.

But to whom in the name of fortune, am I obliged for so astonishing a——

S U B T L E.

To the same person who paid for your cloaths.

C L E R I M O N T.

Tell me who it is this moment, that I may run and throw myself at his feet.

S U B T L E.

His name is——

C L E R I M O N T.

What?

S U B T L E.

Mr.——

C L E R I M O N T.

Mr. who?——

S U B T L E.

Why do you know a certain gentleman, they call——

C L E R I M O N T.

Call what?

S U B T L E.

Mr. Wealthy.

C L E R I M O N T.

My father?

S U B T L E. [*Singing and dancing.*]

'Tis he! 'Tis he! 'Tis he!

C L E R I M O N T.

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CLERIMONT.

I know it now!—what surprise!—what joy!
—what confusion!—Support me, Subtle!—
I am unable to bear this conflict of tumultuous
passions: Oh! [Faints.]

SUBTLE.

Mercy on us! he is in a swoon I believe. Help
there, for heaven's sake, leave your lurking-places,
gentlemen, and come to my assistance.

S C E N E VIII.

Enter WEALTHY and TRUMAN, running in.

WEALTHY.

Good heavens what do I see! my son in this
condition.

SUBTLE.

Alas! we have killed him, in endeavouring to
save him.

TRUMAN.

Clerimont look up, your father is here, who loves
you dearer than ever.

CLERIMONT. [Opening his eyes.]

Oh! Father! The sight of you distracts me.

WEALTHY,

Say not so, my boy! say not so, I am still ready
to shew myself a tender parent.

CLERIMONT. [Throwing himself on his knees to his father.]

Oh, sir, I am unworthy of your goodness.

WEALTHY.

You are no longer so; rise, Clerimont, rise, and
come to my arms! [Lifting him up.]

CLERIMONT.

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CLERIMONT.

This excess of goodness overwhelms me with confusion: you, sir, may pardon me, but I can never forgive myself.

WEALTHY.

Let what has passed be for ever bury'd in oblivion, and let us only think of the future happiness we shall enjoy.

SUBTLE.

Well, gentlemen, have I discharged my trust, think you?

TRUMAN.

Thy zeal and address cannot be too much rewarded.

CLERIMONT.

Excellent rogue! in thus deceiving me, thou hast conferred the greatest of obligations on me; for I can no longer doubt that you acted in concert with my father and Mr. Truman.

SUBTLE.

Nay, sir, do not lavish too many encomiums on me. This gentleman was my sole director.

[*Pointing to Truman.*]

CLERIMONT.

I shall not attempt to express my gratitude to you, sir, for no words can speak the feelings of my heart.

TRUMAN. [*Embracing him.*]

I am overpaid by the joy your happy change gives me. I founded my hopes on the goodness of your heart, and I have not been deceived.

WEALTHY.

In Mr. Truman, Clerimont, you behold the pattern of a true friend. Both you and I are indebted to him for the happiness of our lives. But, my dear boy, if you would crown my felicity, it must be by entering into the married state. I have made
choice

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choice of a person, who, I am persuaded, is every way a suitable match for you; and, in this choice, your own heart will, I am persuaded, concur.

CLERIMONT.

Ah, sir! have I not ruined you? Isabella, you know, is as destitute of a fortune as myself; and, in making her my wife, I shall only make her miserable.

TRUMAN.

You say right; I have thought of this matter myself, and have found a wife for you, who will bring a fortune with her equal to your rank and merit.

WEALTHY.

And I expect you will give her your hand without hesitation.

CLERIMONT.

Sir, you shall be obey'd; but your son can never survive this sacrifice of his inclinations. I cannot live without the possession of Isabella.

WEALTHY.

Why, that is the very person we intend for you.

CLERIMONT.

Intend Isabella for me! and with a fortune!

TRUMAN.

Yes, yes; I will take upon me to provide her a portion. She shall bring you five thousand pounds.

CLERIMONT.

What amazing generosity!

SUBTLE.

In good faith, this is going further than I expected.

WEALTHY.

I have the like sum in the bank; and both together, will make you a very handsome fortune.

CLERIMONT.

The REFORMED RAKE. 169

CLERIMONT.

This happy reverse is too much to bear! Oh father! Oh, mr. Truman!

[Leaning upon Subtle's shoulder.]

WEALTHY.

Behave as my son, Clerimont, and bear your fortune like a man.

SUBTLE.

Courage, my dear master! we need no longer be in fear of bailiffs or their followers; you know you have a letter of licence.

WEALTHY and TRUMAN *laughing*.
Ha, ha, ha, ha.

CLERIMONT.

Traitor! what a trick have you play'd me! I no longer wonder at your mighty courage.

SUBTLE.

Oh, fir, it always shews itself where there is no danger.

CLERIMONT.

Well, well; but you topt your part with mr. Solomon?

TRUMAN.

Not a syllable of what he told you of that affair was truth. I redeemed the jewels out of his hands.

CLERIMONT.

Well, I must confess I have been a great dupe.

SUBTLE.

However, I hope you will allow that I have a fertile imagination.

CLERIMONT.

Sirrah! sirrah! if I was not so happy as I am, I could find in my heart to strangle thee.

H

SCENE

S C E N E the Last.

Enter ISABELLA and LUCY.

WEALTHY.

Isabella, come forward.

CLERIMONT.

How! Has she too been a witness to all that has passed?

LUCY.

Yes, yes; we have heard all, I assure you; and are far from repenting of our curiosity.

TRUMAN.

I had given them their stations.

CLERIMONT.

How happy am I not to have suffered any folly to escape me!

WEALTHY.

Now, Isabella, you are convinc'd that my son loves you. You have been so generous to own, that you have no dislike to him. Take him, then, without hesitation, for he is truly worthy of you. Come, my dear children, give me your hands, that I may join them. Isabella, here is your husband; and, may all-gracious Providence make you as happy as a fond parent can wish you!

CLERIMONT, [To Isabella.]

And do you really accept my hand without repugnance?

ISABELLA. [Smiling.]

I think I shew no great backwardness.

WEALTHY.

And, as for Lucy——

SUBTLE.

Now for it——

WEALTHY.

WEALTHY.

I think she ought not to be dissuaded from her call.

SUBTLE.

For a husband, I presume, you mean, sir?

WEALTHY.

What say you, Lucy?

LUCY.

Sir—it is not fit for me to speak before my betters.

WEALTHY.

Well, I understand you; and therefore I will bestow a brace of hundreds on thee for a portion.

TRUMAN.

And give me leave to add the like sum, if Lucy will accept of it.

LUCY.

Oh, sir, most willingly.

SUBTLE.

Lucy, make a handsome compliment, now, for you and me.

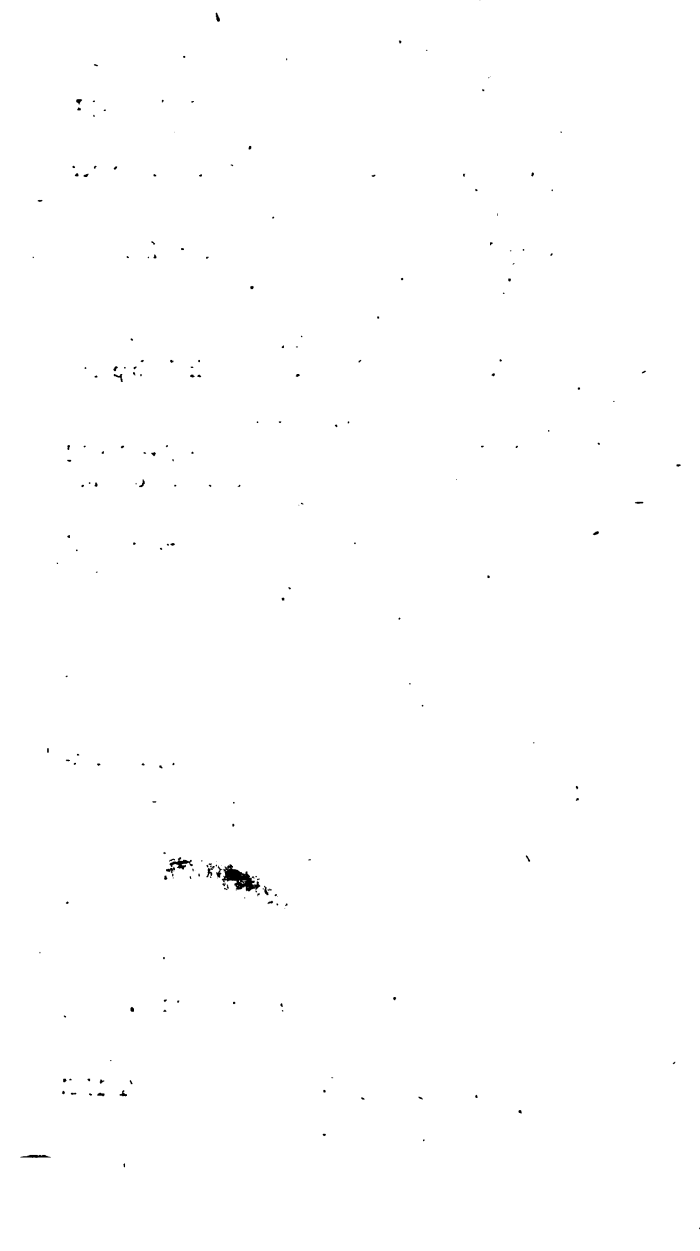
LUCY.

Nay, pr'ythee, take that upon thyself; my imagination is not so very fruitful.

WEALTHY.

There is no need of thanks. I am sufficiently happy, in having found a long lost son returned, and worthy of my tenderness——Let us in, and celebrate the happy occasion.——

END of the REFORMED RAKE.



T H E

WHIMSICAL LOVERS;

OR THE

DOUBLE INFIDELITY.

H 3

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Colonel CAMPAIGN.

HEARTLY.

The CHEVALIER.

MARTIN, Servant to the Colonel.

FOOTBOY to Araminta.

VOLUBLE.

CODICIL.

PUZZLE.

QUIRK.

} Lawyers.

ARAMINTA.

ANGELICA.

BETTY, Waiting-maid to Araminta.

THE
WHIMSICAL LOVERS;
OR THE
DOUBLE INFIDELITY.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Enter ARAMINTA *and* BETTY.

BETTY.

YOU are wonderfully thoughtful, madam!

ARAMINTA.

Alas!

BETTY.

You sigh too!

ARAMINTA.

I have but too much reason,

BETTY.

If it is not impertinent, madam, I would take the liberty of enquiring into the cause of your affliction.

H 4

ARAMINTA.

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A R A M I N T A.

Mine is an incurable malady.

B E T T Y.

Indeed! It must be a very extraordinary one then. But why do you conceal it from me, whom you have so long honoured with your confidence?

A R A M I N T A.

Conceal it! Alas! it is but too visible.

B E T T Y.

Then I am certainly very short-sighted; for, I protest, I cannot perceive it—Come, my dear lady, unbosom yourself freely to me; perhaps I may find means to relieve you.

A R A M I N T A.

Oh! never, never, I tell thee! It is not in thy power, nor in that of any one else, to relieve me.

B E T T Y.

Mercy on us! You frighten me! For heaven's sake let me know what's the matter.

A R A M I N T A.

The matter! The matter, Betty, is that I perceive I am no longer young—And, what adds to my vexation is, that I never wished for youth so much as at this present time.

B E T T Y.

Why, I must confess I do not know any remedy for that disorder. However, you know, there are certain secrets to palliate it; tho' there are none to effect an absolute cure.

A R A M I N T A.

It is that which drives me to despair. Oh! what would I give to be but twenty!

B E T T Y.

B E T T Y.

Why, really, if such a thing could be purchased, it would prove a dear commodity. But, after all, my dear dear lady, are you not still young enough for your old lover, the colonel, who has sighed for you so many years? Why did you not take him five and twenty years ago? you might, perhaps, have been a rich widow by this time.

A R A M I N T A.

And so I might, Betty. But there was a series of obstacles and disappointments that hindered our coming together while we had a love for each other. He had a miserly, ill-natur'd wretch of a guardian, and a rogue into the bargain, who would never come to any settlement with him about his fortune: and, in order to secure the possession of it altogether, endeavoured to make a match between him and his daughter. On my side, I was plagued with an everlasting aunt, on whose death I depended for my fortune; and who, out of her odious fondness for me, would never suffer me to be out of her sight; and insisted upon it, that I should live single during her life. She has not been dead quite five years; and, when I found myself at liberty, and mistress of a large fortune, my old lover was at the wars. He had left the care of his law-suit with the relations of his late guardian, in my hands. It has lately been decided in his favour; and he is now as rich as myself. This house belongs to him, which he desired me to take possession of as my own. I have lived here, very comfortably, these four years; but now he is coming home; coming home, Betty! and, what is worse than all the rest, proposes to live here with me.

H 5

B E T T Y.

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B E T T Y.

As your husband, I suppose, madam?

A R A M I N T A.

Oh, yes! [*Sighing.*]

B E T T Y.

And you have no longer any love for him?

A R A M I N T A.

I have not. But, on your life, Betty, do not betray me; for I have the strongest reasons to conceal this change in my sentiments from his knowledge.

B E T T Y.

You may depend on my discretion, madam—— But, as your passion is so much cooled, why should you so earnestly wish to be younger than you are?

A R A M I N T A.

Because——because——Oh, Betty, I can never declare the reason! Would I could conceal it, even from myself.

B E T T Y.

If I might presume so far, madam——I—I believe I can guess.

A R A M I N T A.

What dost guess, child?

B E T T Y.

That some new inclination——

A R A M I N T A.

Silence, Betty! I charge thee say not a word more.

B E T T Y.

I am dumb, madam, if your ladyship will have it so; but, I'll be hang'd, if some agreeable young fellow has not found the way to your heart.

A R A M I N T A.

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A R A M I N T A.

Leave the room, I say !

B E T T Y.

But, dear madam——

A R A M I N T A.

Begone, this instant, with your saucy guessing, and do not appear again in my sight, till I send for you.

B E T T Y. [*Going.*]

I obey, madam.

A R A M I N T A. [*In a languishing voice.*]

Betty !

B E T T Y. [*Mimicking her.*]

Madam !

A R A M I N T A.

Come back.

B E T T Y.

I had better retire, madam. I am afraid, if I stay, I shall say something that will displease you ; which I would not do for the world.

A R A M I N T A.

Come back, I say, once more. I pardon your indiscretion.

B E T T Y.

Have you any orders to give me, madam ?

A R A M I N T A. [*Leaning upon her.*]

Alas, my dear Betty !

B E T T Y.

Indeed, madam, you had better let me withdraw ; or I shall be guessing something again, that——

A R A M I N T A.

Well, guess freely : I give thee leave.

B E T T Y.

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B E T T Y.

Thank you, madam. I find myself vastly relieved by it. Will you give me leave, then, to ask you two or three little questions?

A R A M I N T A. [*Sighing.*]

Ye——s, with all my heart.

B E T T Y.

I observe that, of late, you have made very frequent visits to your cousin, lady Manlove; who, a few months ago, you treated merely upon the footing of a common acquaintance: pray, what may be the reason of this sudden familiarity? What have you seen at her house, that can draw you so often there? for, I observe, you sometimes go two or three times a-day.

A R A M I N T A.

Oh Betty! I have seen——

B E T T Y.

What have you seen?

A R A M I N T A.

Shall I tell thee?

B E T T Y.

You may do it very safely.

A R A M I N T A.

Why, then, I have seen——Oh, I can never proceed.

B E T T Y.

Courage! Out with it.

A R A M I N T A.

It is impossible.

B E T T Y.

Nay, then, I must help you out. Why, you have seen the young chevalier there, whom her ladyship used to praise so much for his genteel person,

The DOUBLE INFIDELITY. 141

son, wit and accomplishments——You have look'd at him with pleasure ; he has said some soft things to you ; you have listened to them—I mean out of complaisance——

A R A M I N T A.

Merely out of complaisance, I protest to thee.

B E T T Y.

Well, no matter—This complaisance became inclination ; and this inclination is, at length, improved into a warmth and tenderness that is no longer to be withstood : so that, in short, at this present time, you are neither better, nor worse, than over head and ears in love with him. Is not this the whole story ?

A R A M I N T A.

I blush to acknowledge it, as it must give thee reason to think me inconstant.

B E T T Y.

Inconstant ? Good↓ Why, is there any thing more natural, than for our sex to change their minds ? Is it our faults, if our hearts are formed fickle, and our passions vary their objects ? In truth, madam, I think you have already loved one man too long. You have been a perfect miracle of constancy. Besides, can it be expected that a lover of sixty, should be able to keep possession of a lady's heart, against the attacks of an agreeable young fellow of twenty. It would be out of all rule.

A R A M I N T A.

Silence ! We are interrupted.

SCENE

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S C E N E II.

Enter FOOTBOY.

BETTY.

Well! what is your business!

FOOTBOY.

Mr. Heartly is below, and desires to speak with my lady.

ARAMINTA.

Tell him I am not at home.

FOOTBOY.

Lord bless me, madam! I have told him you was.

ARAMINTA.

Well, then, go and tell him that you are mistaken; that I am gone out;—that I am not well;—that I see no-body.—What does the booby stand staring here for? Why don't you go and do as I bid you?

FOOTBOY

Madam, the gentleman——

ARAMINTA.

Well, what of the gentleman?

FOOTBOY.

Why, madam, he has asked how your ladyship did; and I told him you was very well.

ARAMINTA.

Blockhead! who bid you say so?

BETTY.

Blockhead indeed! Hark'e, child; learn from me that you are never to know how your lady does till you have asked her how she will please to be.

FOOTBOY.

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FOOTBOY.

Well, then, there's no harm done; for I can go and tell the gentleman that my lady does not please to be well to-day.

ARAMINTA.

Was there ever such a fool?—Tell him I am extremely busy at present, and beg the favour of him to call another time.

FOOTBOY.

Yes, madam. [*Going, returns again.*]

ARAMINTA.

What now?

FOOTBOY.

I had almost forgot to tell your ladyship, that Mr. Heartly asked me if your ladyship's husband, that is to be, was arrived.

ARAMINTA.

What does the fellow mean, with his husband that is to be?

FOOTBOY.

Lord, madam! why the gentleman that is to marry you; colonel,—colonel,—Cham—Cam—colonel Campaign, ay, that's his name; what answer shall I make Mr. Heartly, madam?

ARAMINTA.

What business is it of Mr. Heartly's?

FOOTBOY.

Really, madam, I don't know; but I'll go and ask him.

ARAMINTA.

Idiot!

FOOTBOY.

Mercy upon us! I know not what to say or do.

BETTY.

You are mightily puzzled, methinks. Why can't you find out that my lady don't desire to see Mr. Heartly;—

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Heartly ; and that it is your business to send him away as civilly as possible ?

FOOTBOY.

Nay, nay, if that's all, let me alone ; I'll go and tell him that he may walk off, for no-body wants his company here ; and if he should ask me the reason, I'll tell him that's no business of his.

ARAMINTA.

This little jackanapes will put me out of all patience. Betty, do you step down to him yourself, and get rid of him as well as you can ; you know how to manage these matters. And, do you hear ? be sure you return immediately.

BETTY.

I shall, madam.—[*To the Footboy.*] Come here you country cub, and learn by me how to turn people away from the door in a genteel manner.

FOOTBOY.

Well, there are strange doings in this town ; one must not say a pig is a pig, or a dog a dog.

[*Exeunt Betty and Footboy.*]

S C E N E III.

ARAMINTA. [*Alone.*]

Heartly want to speak with me ! That man is perpetually at my elbow ! There's no getting rid of him. What can he want with me ? Sure he can entertain no suspicion of my new passion ! He may perhaps have watched me to my cousin's. I am terribly afraid he has. He is horribly clear sighted, and then a jealous lover is a very Argus. But why should I thus needlessly alarm myself ? My cousin is discreet, and my friend ; and I have behaved
with

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with so much circumspection myself, that it is impossible any one can suspect the truth.

S C E N E IV.

Enter BETTY.

ARAMINTA.

Well, Betty?

BETTY.

Well, madam! I have sent mr. Heartly away in the civillest manner imaginable; but I fancy he saw thro' my affected complaisance; for as he was getting into his chariot, he said he should call again soon, to know if the colonel was come to town.

ARAMINTA.

What business is it of his whether he is or not? That Heartly takes a delight in tormenting me; he is the very plague of my life.

BETTY.

But then you hate him in return.

ARAMINTA.

Oh! with the most deadly hatred.

BETTY.

Poor man! well, I declare I cannot help pitying him; for in the main he loves you still.

ARAMINTA.

Not he. He has been convinced these ten years that I never should have an inclination for him while I live, and so he is gasy upon that head. But he is the me most revengeful creature breathing. In order to punish me for rejecting his suit, he does every thing he thinks will vex me; he pesters me with his visits; watches every motion, and finds fault with all I do: and in short, endeavours all in his power to make me unhappy.

BETTY.

B E T T Y.

Well, I cannot conceive how you came to take such a distaste to the man; for every one who knows him gives him the character of being one of the most accomplished and generous spirited men in Paris.

A R A M I N T A.

All that is very true; reason has often pleaded in his behalf. But reason has nothing to do with love, you, know.

B E T T Y.

True; but folly has too often.

A R A M I N T A.

Alas! thy observation is but too just. For example, would not the world think me mad to break the most reasonable engagements, to marry a giddy young fellow?

B E T T Y.

How! Do you then purpose to marry the chevalier?

A R A M I N T A.

Yes, Betty, I must marry him, or die.

B E T T Y.

Nay, then it is better being a little mad or so, than to come to those extremities. But what will your old lover the colonel say to this?

A R A M I N T A.

I will open my whole heart to thee; for I find plainly I cannot do without thy assistance. My intention is to amuse the colonel till I can marry the chevalier privately.

B E T T Y.

But how are you sure of the chevalier's consent?

A R A M I N T A.

ARAMINTA.

I have reason to hope it, he is a young man of family; but, by a change of fortune, is reduced to live upon a small patrimony in the country; so that he cannot but think himself extremely happy to accept of my offer.

BETTY.

Assuredly; I should think him very impertinent if he did not love you with the greatest sincerity.

ARAMINTA.

Nay, I think I may say that he adores me. But do you know how I intend to manage this matter?

BETTY.

No, madam, but I am ready, whenever your ladyship shall think proper to make use of my small talents.

ARAMINTA.

Well, Betty, I shall reward your services.

BETTY. [*Curt'fying.*]

Madam I have not the least doubt of that.

ARAMINTA.

The colonel is to be in town to-day, perhaps he is already arrived; this embarrasses me greatly. Now you must assist me in making him believe, have still the same love for him as formerly, and to keep him from finding out that I love another.

BETTY.

Well, madam, make yourself easy. I love these little plots to my heart, and I warrant I'll perform my part to your satisfaction.

ARAMINTA.

But this is not all. He will be very urgent with me to marry him immediately. Now, we must ward off

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off this attack, and amuse him some way or another,
till I have marry'd the chevalier.

B E T T Y.

You must make haste then.

A R A M I N T A.

Things are in great forwardness, I am going directly to my lawyer's, who has sworn to keep my secret, and I intend to be marry'd to-morrow morning; nay this very evening, if, as I have no reason to doubt, the chevalier is as impatient as myself.

B E T T Y.

But how can you live together? for you say that the colonel is coming here.

A R A M I N T A.

Oh! let me alone to manage that. I will get him to consent to the chevalier's coming here, without the least suspicion of what is going on.

B E T T Y.

Well, I must confess the design is singular; and not a little pleasant; but make haste to your lawyer's, I will wait here for the colonel's arriving, and amuse him so well, that you may have time to make all your necessary dispositions.

A R A M I N T A.

But above all things be secret.

B E T T Y.

Never fear, your affairs are in good hands.

[Exit. Araminta.]

S C E N E V.

B E T T Y. [Alone.]

A superannuated fool, to fall in love with a young rake, and want to cheat an old lover, and such a worthy

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man too, as the colonel is, the best of all human beings ! Upon my soul it is not right. But with all my moralising, have I not promised to assist her in her designs ? I have indeed, and my conscience flies in my face for it. Oh conscience ! conscience !
—However, thou must e'en lie quiet ; for when interest speaks, conscience should be silent.

S C E N E VI.

HEARTLY. [*Stealing in at the door.*]

HEARTLY.

Hift ! hift ! Betty !

BETTY.

Lord bless me ! who's there ? Oh ! is it you, mr. Heartly ? What, returned already ? I thought you had been at the other end of the town.

HEARTLY.

I pretended to drive away, but got out of my chariot at the end of the street, and watched till I saw your mistress go out, and then I slept back here to speak a word with thee.

BETTY.

Be short then, for if my mistress should surprise us together, she would think very ill of me, for she dreads you as she does the plague.

HEARTLY.

And hates me accordingly, I suppose.

BETTY.

Yes, that she does.

HEARTLY.

I have perceived it for a long time, and this is the only reward I have received for years of assiduity and service.

BETTY.

ago The WHIMSICAL LOVERS, Or,

BETTY.

But why should you persist in visiting her?

HEARTLY.

To plague her, and revenge myself on her for her contempt and hatred.

BETTY.

Then you succeed admirably well; for I can assure you, without the least flattery, that the greatest vexation she has, is not being able to get rid of you; and yet I believe you have a good intention.

HEARTLY.

You are right, Betty, I am willing to prevent her from committing errors that I know must be hurtful to her.

BETTY.

A very laudable design, and which may prove, one time or other, of more service to her than you imagine.

HEARTLY.

How so?

BETTY.

You shall know at a proper opportunity.

HEARTLY.

Betty, your words are mysterious; hold, here are ten guineas, now reveal yourself to me without disguise.

BETTY.

Keep your money, Mr. Heartly, and have patience, for I protest I will tell you nothing as yet, I must first of all have a consultation with a certain person whom I expect here to-day.

HEARTLY.

Who is he?

BETTY.

Your old friend the colonel's man.

HEARTLY.

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HEARTLY.

Oh! ho! that honest gentleman is your counsellor?

BETTY.

Yes, sir.

HEARTLY.

And consequently your admirer?

BETTY.

Lord! how inquisitive you are! But I tell you over again, you shall know nothing till I please.

HEARTLY.

Indeed! however, why will you refuse these few pieces,

BETTY.

Oh, I do not absolutely refuse———nay I think I will take them —— in compliance to your request, and on condition you will leave me mistress of my own secret.

HEARTLY.

As long as you please; but on condition likewise, that it shall not always be a secret.

BETTY.

Well, we shall see what Martin will say to it.

HEARTLY.

But tell me, child, is not Araminta overjoyed at the return of her old lover?

BETTY.

Hum!

HEARTLY.

What?

BETTY.

Hey ho!

HEARTLY.

She must certainly be very much pleased, after so long an absence to ——

BETTY.

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B E T T Y.

Oh ! you grow dangerous with your questions, I must fly. Your servant, sir. *[Going.*

H E A R T L Y.

Well, adieu my dear girl : recommend me to mr. Martin.

B E T T Y.

Yes, yes, I'll procure you his favour, and I may venture to say that I can promise you his best services, as I know they will be so handsomely rewarded.

H E A R T L Y.

I understand you. I never think much of parting with my money to procure myself satisfaction.

B E T T Y.

Well, sir, on that footing, his interest and mine are actually at your service.

END of the FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

Enter MARTIN and BETTY, at different doors.
[Seeing Martin, she starts.]

B E T T Y.

MERCY upon us! who is it I see? my dear Martin?

M A R T I N.

'Tis he, indeed, in propria persona.

B E T T Y.

How happy am I to see you safe returned!

M A R T I N.

How happy am I thus to embrace my dearest Betty!

[Runs to catch her in his arms, she pushes him away.]

B E T T Y.

Hold, hold! not quite so fast, good captain Pike! Don't you know that we two are to become one flesh, and that it is against all rules of decorum, for a young woman to suffer any such liberties from a lover before marriage.

M A R T I N.

Well, but my dear girl, do you consider that it is now five years since I beheld these pretty pig's eyes of thine.

B E T T Y.

Alas! the time has seem'd long enough to me.

I.

MARTIN:

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MARTIN.

Well, but all joke apart, dost thou really love me still?

BETTY.

With as much warmth as the first day I began to love.

MARTIN.

And I love thee with as much tenderness as the first moment that blest me with a sight of thee, when thy wit, thy beauty, and thy vivacity, had like to have turned my brain.

BETTY.

Well, and what think you of me now?

MARTIN.

Why, I think you handsomer than ever.

BETTY.

Upon my word, the wars have taught you gallantry; but like master like man, any one may perceive that you are servant to the most constant and passionate of all lovers.

MARTIN.

As passionate as you please; but for constancy—

BETTY.

What! is the colonel's passion for my mistress cooled?

MARTIN.

It is indeed, child! but I have sworn not to betray him; therefore my conscience will not permit me to reveal the secret.

BETTY.

Why, your conscience and mine seem to be much alike in point of delicacy; but each let us leave conscience to itself, and pursue our own measures: if your master is inconstant, my mistress is unfaithful.

MARTIN.

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MARTIN.

Indeed?

BETTY.

Indeed. She is in love with a young chevalier.

MARTIN.

And he is dying for a young orphan of nineteen.

BETTY.

Her lover has not a penny.

MARTIN.

Nor his Amaryllis a farthing.

BETTY.

She intends to be privately marry'd to him.

MARTIN.

He intends to marry her privately.

BETTY.

And she has made me her confidant in this design, that I may assist her in deceiving the colonel.

MARTIN.

And he has imparted his project to me, that I may assist him in imposing upon Araminta.

BETTY.

Good! a double infidelity, so neither party has a right to complain. I am heartily glad of it.

MARTIN.

And with great reason, for we never could have had a more noble opportunity of making our fortunes. When masters or mistresses make confidants of their servants, they put themselves wholly in their power, and their purses are always open, when they have occasion for our services. Let us e'en make hay while the sun shines, and turn the follies of our betters to our own advantage.

I 2

BETTY.

B E T T Y.

Let me alone for that, Martin, I will not be behind-hand with you.

M A R T I N.

I have already made pretty good use of my time, but now we act in conjunction, the greatest things may be done. But we must part, child, for fear it should be suspected we are in concert together. I expect my master here every moment, if he can drag himself from his new flame; for he never suffers her to be out of his sight.

B E T T Y.

Pr'ythee, Martin, tell me, who is this young creature that he is so violently fond of?

M A R T I N.

Why, the girl comes of a good family. She lost her mother when she was only four years old; her father was a brave old officer, but a man of pleasure, and having spent all his fortune in the service, he was obliged to live upon his major's commission, and a small pension. It is now six years since he dy'd, and, as you may suppose, with him all his fortune; so that his daughter, who lives under the care of an old aunt, has nothing to get her a husband, but her youth and beauty.

B E T T Y.

A poor provision!

M A R T I N.

My master first saw her in Flanders; he could not forbear pitying her distressed condition. This pity soon turned to love, and this love has drawn him to propose marriage to her.

B E T T Y.

And can a handsome young creature possibly give
car

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ear to a proposal of that kind, from such a superannuated lover as the colonel?

MARTIN.

No, no, it is not the girl who listens to it, but her aunt. Flattered with the prospect of great advantages from this private wedding, they have suffered themselves to be brought to Paris, where the good man has kept them concealed these three days, being all impatience to conclude the match; the articles are already drawn, and the day is to be fixed as soon as he can conveniently break with Araminta; but I perceive him coming. We must be upon our guard, for he is plaguy cunning and suspicious.

SCENE II.

Enter Colonel CAMPAIGN.

COLONEL.

Ha! Betty! I am glad to see thee, huffy! how dost do? how does your lady do? Is she at home? What was you saying to Martin? What answer did he give thee? Have you been long together?

BETTY. [*Talking very fast.*]

Your servant, sir; I am very well; my mistress is very well; she is just gone out; Martin said nothing to me; I gave him no answer; and we have not been a minute together.

COLONEL.

Hum! a very sprightly and pertinent answer. This is a girl of understanding, Martin!

MARTIN.

Yes faith, sir, they who would take her for a fool, would repent their bargain.

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B E T T Y.

I am very much obliged to you, gentlemen, but the lady I serve, is mistress of so much wit and understanding, that I must be a mere idiot, not to improve under so good an example.

C O L O N E L.

It is certain, Araminta has as much wit as any woman in Paris.

B E T T Y.

And as much beauty.

C O L O N E L.

True. I remember she had once.

B E T T Y.

Once ! and still has.

C O L O N E L.

Oh ! I dare say. But if you had seen her five and twenty or thirty years ago !

B E T T Y.

Good God ! how far back you are going, sir ! A passionate lover ought to be always ignorant of his mistress's age.

C O L O N E L.

True, if he has nothing to put him in mind of it.

B E T T Y.

Why, that is just your case, there are some beauties that last for ever.

C O L O N E L.

In troth they are very scarce.

B E T T Y.

You'll find one here, I promise you ; she has scarce lost a single charm. I protest, sir, I think you yourself look as well as ever you did.

C O L O N E L.

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COLONEL.

Flattering slut!

BETTY.

Nay, I'll be hang'd if my lady will not say the same.

COLONEL.

I am afraid you will find yourself mistaken, Betty; years, and the fatigues of the field, have greatly altered my features.

BETTY.

Altered, do you say? may, I never be marry'd, if I should take you to be above thirty by your looks.

COLONEL.

And yet I am nearer sixty, child.

BETTY.

Well, well, you may make yourself what you please; but you will be still the same to my lady, who loves you in so passionate, so tender, so faithful——

MARTIN.

Yes, the women of this town are remarkable for their fidelity.

COLONEL.

Then Paris is strangely altered since I left it.

BETTY.

Well, sir, I'll go and acquaint my lady of your return, that she may the sooner have the inexpressible joy of bidding you welcome.

COLONEL.

I am much obliged to you; but if she should be very busy, I desire she will not interrupt herself for me. You understand me, Betty?

I 4

BETTY.

B E T T Y.

Lord bless me, sir! what d'ye mean? my lady can have no business so urgent, as that of enjoying the pleasure of your company. I'll take my leave, sir, but pray do not be impatient, I will send my lady to you as soon as possible. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E III.

C O L O N E L.

I shall run mad!

M A R T I N.

Lord bless us! how this woman loves you, sir!

C O L O N E L.

Who? Betty?

M A R T I N.

Betty! no, your mistress.

C O L O N E L.

Which mistress?

M A R T I N.

Oh! 'tis the old one I mean.

C O L O N E L.

The old one, the old one! Ay, that's too evident. What an unhappy fellow am I! All the world complains of the inconstancy of women, and I am half mad to find them so faithful.

M A R T I N.

You must have been born under a fatal planet, that's certain. But you are in humor at present, I think, to break with Araminta, without any ceremony.

C O L O N E L.

'Zounds! do you think I am mad? We should have female resentment and jealousy raise such a storm.

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form about our ears, that there would be no living.

MARTIN.

If your secret should transpire, you are undone.

COLONEL.

Be sure therefore that you do not suffer it to escape you.

MARTIN.

I'll do all I can to keep it, but it begins to be a great burthen to me already.

COLONEL.

How, villain! would you think of betraying me?

MARTIN.

Betray you! No, no, you may confide in me: but I was thinking, if any one should take it into their head to offer me a handsome sum of money, it might——

COLONEL.

Why, did not I give thee fifty guineas not two months ago, for thy secrecy?

MARTIN.

True, sir, but another fifty would seal up my lips for ever.

COLONEL.

Well, well, here they are.

MARTIN.

Now I am mute; silent as death.

COLONEL.

The rascal! [*Aside.*] Come, come, my honest lad, you shall have no reason to complain. Zounds! here comes my old mistress. Run quick, you know where, and tell my charmer that I will return to her instantly.

S C E N E IV.

Enter ARAMINTA. [Who makes a fall step, looks confused, then runs to the colonel, who catches her in his arms, turning his head another way.]

ARAMINTA.

Is it he? Do they not deceive me? No; it is himself; delightful truth! it is my dear—loved Campaign whom I behold once more.

COLONEL.

My charming, lovely, best lov'd Araminta!

ARAMINTA.

My joy is so great——

COLONEL.

My transport is so excessive——

ARAMINTA.

That it turns my brain.

COLONEL.

And makes me mad.

ARAMINTA.

It is insupportable!

COLONEL.

I cannot bear it.

ARAMINTA.

Dear colonel, let us endeavour to recover ourselves; for indeed our present sensations are too violent.

COLONEL.

So violent that they overcome our reason.

ARAMINTA.

How dangerous is excessive joy!

COLONEL.

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COLONEL.

It stagnates the blood.

ARAMINTA.

Your observation is very just. I shake from head to foot.

COLONEL.

And I tremble all over; no stone can be colder.

ARAMINTA.

Admire the effects of sudden transport!

COLONEL.

Oh! I am so transported;—so transported;—that I have not power to look at you!

ARAMINTA.

I can look at you, it is true; but then it is with a certain insensibility—and coolness—and—something so like indifference.

COLONEL.

Just so is it with me. Violent passions have strange symptoms.

ARAMINTA.

Which none can know but those who feel them. But once more I say, let us endeavour to be cool;—let us see one another;—look at one another;—speak to one another;—and hear one another;—as if—as if:—in short, as if we had no longer any love for one another.

COLONEL.

The very thing I was going to propose to you myself.

ARAMINTA.

Oh! it is a fine thing to be mistress of one's self.

COLONEL.

Ah! most certainly tranquillity is a great virtue, it is the source of health.

ARAMINTA.

ARAMINTA.

Now you are talking of health, how is your's?

COLONEL.

It has been very indifferent a long time.

ARAMINTA.

And so has mine. Don't you think I am greatly altered?

COLONEL.

You are still very agreeable; but to say the truth, I think you are not the same as when I left you; and what do you think of me?

ARAMINTA.

Still pleasing; but you are neither so young, nor so fresh-coloured, nor so well looking as you was.

COLONEL.

No, no, my youthful days are past; and then-I have such a weakness hangs about me that would make you pity me.

ARAMINTA.

And I, my dear colonel, have lost all taste for every thing; I have a cough that never leaves me; it tears me to pieces night and day. [*Coughs.*]

COLONEL.

I am in the same condition; [*Coughing.*] I am afraid I am in a consumption.

[*Here they both cough for some time.*]

ARAMINTA.

Ay, ay, I see plainly it is over with us both: what a pity! yet hold, we may continue to love each other, notwithstanding our infirmities.

COLONEL.

We may so; just as much, or as little as we judge proper.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

Yes, yes, we may hold the reins of our passion in our own hands.—We will be friendly lovers: oh! friendship, what charms hast thou!

COLONEL.

No grief, no anxiety, no outrageous fallies disturb thy gentle reign like those which wait upon the tyrant love.

ARAMINTA.

Love! oh horrible! Love at our years!

COLONEL. [*With a sprightly air.*]

And do you no longer love me, charming Araminta?

ARAMINTA.

Oh! I do not say so; I only say that henceforward we will love without talking of it.

COLONEL.

Admirably said; and I am a rascal if I ever mention any such thing to you again as long as I live.

S C E N E V.

Enter HEARTLY.

HEARTLY.

With your leave, madam, I must embrace my dear friend Campaign. [*Embracing the colonel.*] I heard of your arrival with the greatest joy; and as an old and faithful friend to you both, am come to wish you joy of being thus restored to each other. Believe me, no one can participate more in your mutual satisfaction than myself.

COLONEL. [*Coldly.*]

Dear Mr. Heartly, I am very much obliged to you.

ARAMINTA.

ARAMINTA. [*The same.*]

Sir, you do us a great deal of honour;

HEARTLY.

Hey day! what's the meaning of all this? I expected to find you transported, enraptured, full of extacy, and all that!—and here you stand as motionless as a couple of statues.

ARAMINTA.

Sudden surprize!—sir—has—

COLONEL.

Oh! very surprising effects.

HEARTLY.

There I agree with you; but you ought to recover yourselves, and testify to each other your mutual—

ARAMINTA.

You do not consider, mr. Heartly, that we are no longer young; and that those fallies of passion which would have been very suitable some years ago, would be quite ridiculous now.

COLONEL.

We love each other now as reasonable people ought to do. Love imposes laws on youth, old age on love.

HEARTLY.

So then this is to be a match of reason? Well, I am very glad of it! but tell me, is the day fixed? when is it to be? for I am resolved to dance at it, I assure you.

ARAMINTA.

We are not quite determined yet.

COLONEL.

Zounds! Heartly, you will not give us time to breathe: marriage is an affair that requires some preparation.

HEARTLY.

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HEARTLY.

You take a furious long time in preparing, me thinks ; and after all, you have nothing to do but sign the contract ; that Codicil your lawyer drew up for you five and twenty years ago.

ARAMINTA.

Oh ! there are a great many things to be altered in it.

COLONEL.

Certainly ; it requires to be read over, and duly considered article by article ; and a proper precaution taken in regard to bequeathing our fortunes ; for it is not likely we shall leave a son to inherit them.

HEARTLY.

A might matter to be puzzled about ! Let it be stipulated in the contract, that the longest liver is to succeed to the whole of both your fortunes ; this is the way to act between people who have such an affection for each other, as you two have.

ARAMINTA.

You are right to be sure, Mr. Heartly. But—

HEARTLY.

But what ?

ARAMINTA.

You must know I have a nephew, that——

COLONEL.

Have you a nephew, do you say, madam ?

ARAMINTA.

Yes ; and one for whom I have a very great affection ; and to whom I intend to leave the bulk of my fortune.

COLONEL.

Nothing can be more reasonable.

HEARTLY.

How ! Do you approve of this ?

COLONEL.

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COLONEL.

Why not, since the case is my own. I have a niece!—a most charming young creature!—whom I love almost to adoration; and whom I intend to leave sole heiress of all I am worth.

HEARTLY.

Really you are mighty good relations.

COLONEL.

My dear Araminta, a thought is just come into my head, which if it meets with your approbation——

ARAMINTA.

Can my dear colonel propose any thing that his Araminta would refuse?

COLONEL.

Obliging creature! Well then, I have an inclination to send for my niece as soon as possible, and give her an apartment in this house. She is young, and wants experience: you, my dear Araminta, are mistress of a great share of wit, understanding and prudence; let me therefore request you to take her under your direction.

ARAMINTA.

Most willingly; on condition that you will in return take my nephew under your's. He is a young man of a very agreeable person, and an amiable disposition; but then he is so wild, so giddy, that he wants some person of prudence to have an eye upon his conduct.

COLONEL.

It is a troublesome task you have imposed upon me, madam; however, I will undertake it in return for the like favour you are willing to shew me in regard to my niece.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

You may depend upon my care of her.

COLONEL.

As you may of mine in regard to your nephew.

HEARTLY.

Well, good folks, I must own you surprize me greatly; for I never before heard a syllable about this nephew and niece.

ARAMINTA.

Did not you know that I had a sister married in the west?

HEARTLY.

No, really, I knew nothing of any such thing.

COLONEL.

Nor that I had a brother who was settled in the north?

HEARTLY.

As little.

COLONEL.

And yet it is very true.

HEARTLY.

But as to your sister, madam, it was always said that she died without children.

ARAMINTA.

Without children! Well, I love you for that prodigiously. It is very likely, indeed, that my sister should be marry'd twenty years and not have one son. Suppose you should see him here, what would you say then?

HEARTLY.

Not a syllable.

COLONEL.

And when my niece makes her appearance, pray what will you have to object?

HEARTLY.

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HEARTLY,

Oh! nothing at all.

ARAMINTA.

Well, then, I'll go this instant and fetch my nephew. Your servant, sir. [*Exit Araminta hastily.*]

COLONEL.

And I my niece.—Your servant, sir,

[*Exit Colonel the same.*]

S C E N E VI.

HEARTLY. [*Alone.*]

Hey day! what is the meaning of all this? I profess I cannot unravel it. They do not seem to have the least joy at seeing each other after so long an absence; no impatience to come together! One appears to be wholly taken up with his niece; and the other can talk of nothing but her nephew. This same new discovered nephew and niece appear very suspicious to me. My curiosity is raised; and—besides, both the colonel and Araminta seem desirous of keeping me at a distance; such behaviour offends me greatly. There is some mystery that I cannot discover as yet: however, I am resolved to get to the bottom of it, cost what it will. This discovery will give me infinite pleasure; and real satisfaction can never be too dearly purchased.

[*Exit Heartly.*]

END of the SECOND ACT.

A C T.

ACT III. SCENE I.

Enter ARAMINTA.

MY lawyer has drawn the contract as I desired him, and I am extremely well pleased with his manner of doing it; but I dare not sign it as yet. My engagements with the colonel are of such a nature as to be dissoluble only by joint consent; this must be the case at last, and I hope it will not be long first.

SCENE II.

Enter BETTY.

BETTY.

Dear madam, are you here? I did not know you was returned; and I die with impatience to hear how you have come off in your first interview with the colonel.

ARAMINTA.

Oh! to admiration my dear Betty! The colonel is the most tractable and credulous of all beings: no suspicions, no distrust, no jealousy! He is as innocent as a lamb; or indeed, between you and I, more of an idiot than any thing else.

BETTY.

He must be greatly changed then!!

ARAMINTA.

You would hardly know him for the same man; but thank heaven, it gives me no great uneasiness:

I.

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I wish he was more stupid than he seems to be. But what am I saying? he is all I could wish. Do you know he has consented to my nephew's living here? —here, in this house, girl!

B E T T Y.

Your nephew, madam!

A R A M I N T A.

Yes, my nephew I tell thee.

B E T T Y.

Pray, madam, where may this same nephew be? for I do not remember having ever seen him.

A R A M I N T A.

You shall see him then very soon. It is my dear chevalier, him whom I love; whom I intend to make my husband.

B E T T Y.

Mercy on us! Is the chevalier, whom you are so passionately fond of, your nephew?

A R A M I N T A.

Psha! how dull of apprehension thou art. My nephew! No; but I have conferred that title on him to have a fair pretext for bringing him under this roof.

B E T T Y.

Ah ha! I understand you now! And so the colonel really believes this on your bare word.

A R A M I N T A.

He did not make the least objection, nor once question the truth of it.

B E T T Y.

Oh! the good man must be superannuated; for if he had three grains of understanding he must see thro' the deceit. However, I am not so easily the dupe of appearances; and I think I have very just grounds

grounds to conclude that the colonel's affection for your ladyship is as much cool'd as your's for him.

ARAMINTA.

It may be so; and yet, Betty, I have still a great regard for him; and, when I found him so easy and complying, with regard to my pretended nephew, I thought I could do no less, in return, but give my consent to his introducing his niece here.

BETTY.

His niece! Has the colonel a niece too, madam?

ARAMINTA.

Yes; but a real niece, whom he intends to make his heiress.

BETTY. [*Aside.*]

I find they have been putting a trick upon each other.

ARAMINTA.

This is a lucky circumstance for me; is it not, Betty?

BETTY.

O, very lucky, to be sure, madam!

ARAMINTA.

For, while I pretend to follow the colonel's example, I gain my own ends, without the least suspicion. But, now, I must give you your instructions.

BETTY.

Well, let us hear them.

ARAMINTA.

Here is the chevalier's direction: you will easily find him out; for he does not live far from hence.

BETTY.

Very well. And what am I to say to this same chevalier?

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

What I have already told thee. But, recommend secrecy to him, Betty; and be sure to tell him, that his future happiness and fortune depend upon his prudence and discretion. That he must endeavour to impose upon—the world; and so effectually blind the colonel, that he may never be able to discover the mystery.

BETTY.

All this is extremely well imagined; but I have some certain scruples.

ARAMINTA.

Scruples! pray, what are they?

BETTY.

Why, madam, you seem ready to allow, that the colonel is goodness itself; and yet you are doing all in your power to cheat and deceive him: and, in this laudable plan, you stand in need of my address and assistance. Is it not so?

ARAMINTA.

Very well; and what then?

BETTY.

Why, then, you will, in all probability, succeed to your wishes. But, pray, what am I to gain by all this? eternal reproaches from my conscience; a conscience that has always had an invincible aversion to whatever is contrary to openness and good faith. You may perceive, by this, how great a violence I must do myself, in assisting you to break your first engagements, by abusing the unsuspecting temper of a worthy man. In short, it appears to me a shocking crime; and I cannot even bring myself to keep your secret.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

How, Betty! will you abandon me then, at the very time that I stand the most in need of your assistance? Have you a mind to ruin me?

BETTY.

It is not me, my dear lady; it is my conscience.

ARAMINTA.

But is there no way of gaining over this same difficult conscience of thine?

BETTY.

Oh Lord! I am afraid not—that is to say—not easily—No, no, I am persuaded it is not a small matter that would silence it.

ARAMINTA. [*Pulling out a purse.*]

I am of your opinion—and therefore, do you see—Here is somewhat which is not a trifle. Look, Betty.

BETTY.

Oh! madam, for heaven's sake hide it; I cannot bear to look at it.

ARAMINTA.

Why so?

BETTY.

Because I am but a frail mortal, and dread my own weakness.

ARAMINTA.

Well, take it however: it is well furnished, and I make you a present of it.

BETTY.

Thank you, dear madam—[*Opening the purse, and taking out a few pieces.*] Ah! cursed metal! what conscience can hold out against thee?

ARAMINTA.

And now, you surrender yourself, Betty?

BETTY.

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B E T T Y. [*Putting up the purse.*]

This is a proof of it, madam. [*Aside.*] I faith hypocrisy is a good trade; and I no longer wonder so many honest reputable people make use of it.

A R A M I N T A.

Well, now make haste, to do as I have ordered you. Some urgent business calls me abroad; but I shall be back again presently, to receive my dear nephew—But, good heavens! what do I see? Here he comes himself!

S C E N E III.

Enter the C H E V A L I E R.

B E T T Y. [*To Araminta.*]

Is this the chevalier?

A R A M I N T A.

It is the dear creature himself!

B E T T Y.

Troth, you have a good choice in nephews.

A R A M I N T A.

Chevalier, what brought you hither? It is not your time to appear yet. I am terrified lest the colonel should see you, before I have informed you fully of my intentions, and the manner in which I would have you behave in his presence.

C H E V A L I E R.

Who is this colonel, madam?

B E T T Y. [*To the Chevalier.*]

You must say aunt.

C H E V A L I E R.

Aunt! what does the wench mean?

A R A M I N T A.

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A R A M I N T A.

I was going to send Betty with a message, to acquaint you with what I had been doing, and the resolutions I had formed in regard to you; and she was just coming, when your arrival prevented her: however, I would explain myself more at large to you this moment, was it not that I am afraid of the colonel's coming in sooner than I should desire. Therefore, my dear Chevalier, I must conclude—

B E T T Y. [*To Araminta.*]

My dear nephew, if you please.

C H E V A L I E R.

My nephew! and my aunt! what the devil is the meaning of all this?

A R A M I N T A.

I will unravel this mystery to you at my cousin's, whither I am now going. Come after me as soon as possible, and do not be seen in this house again, till you are properly prepared.

C H E V A L I E R.

It is enough, madam; I'll follow you instantly.
[*Exit Araminta.*]

S C E N E IV.

C H E V A L I E R.

I suppose you are Araminta's chamber-maid?

B E T T Y.

You suppose very right, sir.

C H E V A L I E R.

Pray, now, child, could you let me a little into the secret of all this affair; and what your lady's intentions are with regard to me?

K

B E T T Y.

B E T T Y.

Why, yes—I see no harm there will be in it—
You must know, then, that she proposes to make
your fortune.

C H E V A L I E R.

By what means, pray?

B E T T Y.

By taking you for a husband. But this is to be
done with great secrecy, I can tell you. Well,
what think you of it?

C H E V A L I E R. [*Coldly.*]

I am extremely obliged to the lady, and shall
endeavour to merit her goodness.

B E T T Y.

Merit her goodness! Humph! A mighty cold
acknowledgement, methinks. Ah! my poor mis-
tress; you are a great fool, indeed!

C H E V A L I E R.

What do you mean? What folly has your mis-
tress been guilty of?

B E T T Y.

That of intending to take you for a husband.
What greater one can she be guilty of?

C H E V A L I E R.

I understand you; you think I am too young for
her?

B E T T Y.

No, no, that is not the case; I mean she is too
old for you. And, pray, tell me, Chevalier, do
you love her?

C H E V A L I E R.

I cannot say—positively—that I am very much
in love with her.

B E T T Y.

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B E T T Y.

Not very much—But, how much? What do you feel with regard to her?

C H E V A L I E R.

All that a man of honour can, for a person to whom he has so many obligations; gratitude—But, I should suspect, by all these questions, that your mistress had employed you to sound my heart.

B E T T Y.

Indeed you are mistaken: and, to prove it to you, I must tell you that my mistress is mad enough to persuade herself that you are most furiously in love with her.

C H E V A L I E R.

But why, then, do you take such pains to read my thoughts?

B E T T Y.

To assist, if I can, in making you happy; and prevent my mistress from being miserable.

C H E V A L I E R.

She cannot be so with me.

B E T T Y.

But she will be so, even against your will. The man who has not an affection for a wife, can never make her happy.

C H E V A L I E R.

You talk so sensibly, child, that I am half tempted to repose a confidence in you.

B E T T Y.

If you knew me a little better, you would do it without reserve. And, to begin to merit it, I will give you one piece of advice, which is, to think twice before you marry Araminta: not but that she is a very deserving woman, tho' I am be-

traying her; yet, when I consider your two ages, I really pity you both.

CHEVALIER.

Doubtless we are both to be pity'd; she for loving me, and I for being obliged to marry her. But, what can be done, child? my birth is my only inheritance; and birth, without the means to support it, is the greatest of all misfortunes. The person whom I love, and whom, was I rich, I would make my wife preferable to any of her sex, is as unhappy as myself. She is a young woman of quality; amiable, witty, and full of life and spirit. In a word—But, alas! we are parted against our wills. My heart bleeds when I think of her situation. Her mother has been dead some years; a little while ago she lost her father, and is left without any friend but an old aunt, who has as little fortune as herself.

BETTY.

What you now tell me, calls to my mind a story I heard this morning. And, now I think of it, pray, sir, was the young lady you are speaking of, born at Paris?

CHEVALIER.

No; she was born, and lives, in Provence.

BETTY.

Might I ask whose daughter she is?

CHEVALIER.

Her father was a major in the army, and commander of a garrison town where I was upon duty for six months.

BETTY.

What is this I hear? Is it possible that mere chance should have brought about so extraordinary an adventure?

CHEVALIER.

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CHEVALIER.

I do not understand you. I see nothing extraordinary in all this.

BETTY.

I am so struck with it, that I dare not ask any more questions. But, I am the most mistaken that ever woman was, if you do not see this beloved mistress of your's this very day.

CHEVALIER.

Good heav'ns! where?

BETTY.

In this house.

CHEVALIER.

What can bring her here?

BETTY. [*Looking out.*]

Hold! I see some persons coming this way, who will inform you.

S C E N E V.

Enter ANGELICA and MARTIN.

ANGELICA. [*To Martin, not seeing the Chevalier.*]

Is this the colonel's house?

MARTIN.

Yes, miss.

ANGELICA.

I cannot enter it without trembling.

CHEVALIER.

Good God! what do I see? May I believe my eyes?

MARTIN. [*To Angelica.*]

A little courage, miss, will soon get the better of this apprehension.

ANGELICA.

Never, Martin; never.

BETTY. [*To the Chevalier.*]

What ails you, sir?

CHEVALIER.

I know not whether I am dreaming or waking!

ANGELICA.

I look upon this house as a sepulchre, in which I am going to bury myself for life. But, where's my aunt? Sure she has not left me!

MARTIN.

She is gone up to see the apartments that are allotted for you.

ANGELICA.

Let us go to her then.

CHEVALIER.

It is she! It is Angelica!

ANGELICA.

What voice is that?

CHEVALIER.

Charming Angelica!

ANGELICA.

Good heav'ns! I know the sound of that voice. I tremble. Quick, Martin, let us fly from hence.

CHEVALIER.

Stop, a moment, my dearest Angelica!

ANGELICA.

Alas! Is it you, my dear Chevalier? What chance has brought us together here? Why do you follow me? Did we not promise to avoid each other for ever?

CHEVALIER,

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CHEVALIER.

It is true ; but what do you here ?

ANGELICA.

I come to die with grief and—

MARTIN.

Hey day ! what's the meaning of all this ?
Come, miss, your aunt will be seeking for you.

ANGELICA.

I'll follow you. My legs will not support me !
I can bear it no longer. Oh ! [Faints.]

MARTIN.

Help, help, Betty ! This is a serious affair.

CHEVALIER. [*Kneeling, and taking hold of Angelica's hand.*]

Look up, charming Angelica ! recal your fleeting senses ! or I shall expire at your feet.

ANGELICA.

Alas ! Why do you call me back to life ? Leave me ! leave me, to die in peace ! it is the only happiness that now remains for me.

CHEVALIER.

Live, live, my charmer ! live for my sake.

ANGELICA.

Life is hateful, since I cannot be your's.

MARTIN.

Egad, Betty, I believe these young folks are in love with each other ?

BETTY.

Thou hast guessed rightly. Poor souls, they deserve compassion. I can hardly keep from crying.

MARTIN.

Nay, pr'ythee don't cry ; for, if thou dost, I shall cry too ; and that will be ridiculous enough.

K 4

[Going.]

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[*Going up to the Chevalier and Angelica, who are entertaining each other in dumb show*] Sir! miss! fir! truce with your condolences, if you please; for I expect my master here every moment; and, I assure you, this is a scene which will not at all divert him.

CHEVALIER.

Thy master! Who is he? What business has he with me? or what right has he to be offended with what I say to this lady, or she to me? Is she in his power?

MARTIN.

Not yet, indeed; but——

CHEVALIER.

But I—*Seizeth him*—what do you mean by that But?—Explain thyself, or this moment is thy last.

MARTIN. [*In a fright.*]

The devil! Was there ever such a hot-headed man?

ANGELICA.

Martin, I charge thee, do not satisfy him.

CHEVALIER.

If he does not explain that But, he is a dead man.

MARTIN.

I am in a very pretty situation, truly! Sir, will you please to consider, that, as a faithful servant, I am under a necessity of keeping my master's secrets.

CHEVALIER.

But this secret concerns me as well as him; and therefore I will know it this instant. Speak, rascal! what is your master's name?

MARTIN.

His name, sir? Oh, that is no secret; I may tell you his name very safely—His name is colonel Campaign.

CHEVA-

CHEVALIER.

Colonel Campaign? Well! is he acquainted with this lady?

MARTIN.

Oh! yes, sir, intimately.

CHEVALIER.

How long since?

MARTIN.

About two months since.

CHEVALIER.

Has he the boldness to entertain a passion for her?

MARTIN.

Boldness, sir?—my master is as bold as a lion.

CHEVALIER.

We shall put his courage to the test, perhaps. But what are his intentions towards miss Angelica?

MARTIN.

His intentions, sir! his intentions!—I know nothing of them.

CHEVALIER. [*Drawing his sword.*]

Oh, ho! you plead ignorance, do you?

ANGELICA.

Good heavens! what are you doing, Chevalier?

BETTY.

Lord! are you going to kill my husband that is to be?

CHEVALIER.

Let the rascal save his life then, by answering to what I ask him. Does your master intend to marry this lady?

MARTIN.

He does, and he does not.

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CHEVALIER.

He does, and he does not!—Speak more plain,
or by all that's sacred——

MARTIN.

Well, then, if you must have the whole truth,
my master does intend to marry this lady: but there
are some indispensable reasons for his doing it pri-
vately.

CHEVALIER.

What are those reasons?

BETTY.

My mistress, you know, has her reasons for being
privately married to you.

ANGELICA.

What's this I hear? the Chevalier going to be
married to your mistress!

CHEVALIER.

Must I behold the lovely Angelica in the arms of
another! I can never survive the sight.

ANGELICA.

My greatest consolation, my dear Chevalier, is,
that death will soon deliver me from the disagreeable
situation to which my aunt has condemned me.

CHEVALIER.

No! faithless as thou art fair; you will forget
me in the embraces of an amiable husband.

MARTIN.

Yes, truly; a husband of sixty-two must be very
amiable.

CHEVALIER.

Of sixty-two?

MARTIN.

Not a week less.

ANGELICA.

ANGELICA.

Judge from hence how much I am to be pity'd. It is wretched I, who will be forgotten, while the man I love revels in the arms of a young and beautiful bride.

BETTY.

Whose charms have all the force that half a century can give them.

ANGELICA.

Half a century!

CHEVALIER.

Judge now, my charmer, if I am the least to be pity'd.

ANGELICA.

Let us renew our resolution, never to see each other again.

BETTY.

It will be a very vain one; for you'll see one another every day, every hour, and every moment.

ANGELICA.

Just heaven! what strange fatality is this?

BETTY.

You must know you are both to live under this roof; you, sir, as the nephew of my mistress; and you, madam, as his master's niece.

[Points to Martin]

CHEVALIER.

This is some consolation in the midst of my sufferings.

ANGELICA.

Alas! I can see only new subjects of grief and affliction!

BETTY.

Come, come, never despair; in the mean time be careful not to disclose the secret we have now revealed to you. You, Chevalier, go to your rendezvous

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devious with Araminta; and do you, madam, go and take possession of your apartment.

ANGELICA.

But, my dear Chevalier—

BETTY.

No more words;—you must part for the present. You are sure of opportunities enough of meeting.

ANGELICA.

Adieu.

CHEVALIER.

Farewell.

[Exeunt Angelica and Martin at one door, and the Chevalier at the other.]

S C E N E VI.

BETTY. *[Alone.]*

Well now, this adventure is altogether new, and has affected me in a strange manner. I am almost tempted to set my wits to work, to break off the ridiculous matches that are to divide our poor young creatures. Divide them! what am I talking of? Will they not live together? Will they not see one another? Talk to one another? Love one another? and perhaps, much more tenderly than if they were married. What pretty adventures this may be productive of, Egad; I have them all present to my imagination, and they divert me prodigiously. Ah! mr. Heartly, if you knew what was going on, how finely would you indulge your passion of revenge; and what might I expect for furnishing it with such excellent food. Egad, I am half tempted to do it. I'll go and see if he be prowling about the house, and provided I find my account in it, I shall e'en lay all impertinent scruples aside. *[Exit Betty.]*

END of the THIRD ACT.

A C T

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Enter BETTY.

METHINKS Mr. Heartly is very neglectful of us. I thought he had been always upon the watch after my mistress, but I cannot see any thing of him. Sure he can never be grown inactive of late, he who used always to trouble himself more about other people's business than his own; but here he comes, following Martin. He wants to engage him in discourse——that is just his way. Fox! fox! you are known by the tail.

SCENE II.

Enter HEARTLY, following MARTIN.

HEARTLY.

But pry'thee hear me.

MARTIN.

No, sir; I am an honest lad, and never listen to people who want to corrupt me.

BETTY. [*Aside.*]

Mighty well. Martin I find is talking in the same strain to him that I did to my mistress. He has his scruples; he will make the most of them I'll answer for him. [*To Heartly.*] Your humble servant, sir.

HEARTLY.

Oh! your servant, mrs. Betty.

BETTY.

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B E T T Y.

I am afraid I interrupt you, fir; you seem to have some business with mr. Martin.

H E A R T L Y.

Why I have so; but mr. Martin rides resty; tho' I only ask two or three words from him.

M A R T I N.

Not a syllable will you get from me. Zookers! I am not so soon set a talking.

H E A R T L Y.

Tell me who this same niece is, that is dropt out of the clouds?

M A R T I N.

I am deaf.

B E T T Y.

And I suppose you want to know who this same nephew is, and where my mistress found him?

H E A R T L Y.

I do so, my girl; and beg you to satisfy my curiosity.

B E T T Y.

I am dumb.

H E A R T L Y. [*Aside.*]

Hum! I see how the matter stands.—Heark'e, good folks, I find you perfectly well understand each other; and, like the wheels of a watch, you move always together.—Therefore one word will be as good as a thousand. You know I am what the world calls a rich old fellow; I have no one to leave my money to after my death, and so I can freely indulge the propensity I have to oblige those who are my friends: now, if you have an inclination to be of that number, I will make you both a present of a sum that shall enable you to marry, and live comfortably.

MARTIN.

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MARTIN.

Methinks my hearing is returned.—Sir, with your leave.—Betty a word with you. [*Takes Betty to the side of the stage.*] This is a very seducing man!

BETTY.

The most dangerous creature I ever came near!

MARTIN.

He wants to get our secret from us.

BETTY.

True; but he must pay well for it.

MARTIN.

And shall we give way to the temptation?

BETTY.

You know we have agreed to get as much as we can.

MARTIN.

Why that's true.

BETTY.

And where can we meet with a better opportunity?

MARTIN.

But then shall we not be traitors to those who have employ'd us?

BETTY.

Fish! you fool, it is better to be traitors to others than to ourselves.

MARTIN.

Nay, now you have sealed up my lips. No scruples can hold out against so noble a maxim.

HEARTLY.

Pray is your conference nearly finished?

MARTIN.

It is, sir; speak, and we will reply.

HEARTLY.

HEARTLY.

Well, then, the matter stands thus; Araminta, and my friend the colonel, have told me a long story of a nephew and a niece, who—What! you laugh both of you? Ah ha! I was right in my suspicions I find. I'll be hang'd if these are not relations of their own making; and that they have put a trick upon each other. Am I not right?

MARTIN and BETTY. [*Laugh.*]

Ha! ha! ha!

HEARTLY.

You laugh again! Well, then, I'll proceed. The nephew I imagine to be some young blade, who has found the means to please Araminta; and the niece some indigent, but handsome girl, that my old friend is enamoured with.—You make me no answer?

MARTIN.

There is no room for it, you have guess't the whole.

HEARTLY.

Indeed! then here are monstrous doings going forward.

BETTY.

Hold, sir! by your leave. Tho' their intentions are ridiculous enough, yet they are strictly lawful.

HEARTLY.

What do you mean by lawful?

BETTY.

Yes, sir, I repeat it, lawful. Marriage is the view on both sides.—This is to be done secretly indeed; and here will be two very pretty households under one roof.

HEARTLY.

HEARTLY.

What a lucky discovery! Nothing can be more pleasant! They are to conceal their marriage from each other I suppose.

MARTIN.

You have it. The articles are ready drawn, and each party has a separate lawyer.

HEARTLY.

And pray who are these lawyers?

MARTIN.

My master's lives at the corner of this street.

BETTY.

And my mistress's not ten doors from this house.

HEARTLY.

I know them both, and I have an excellent scheme in my head. But tell me, have either of you seen this nephew and niece?

BETTY.

Yes, sir, I have.

HEARTLY.

And are they agreeable in their persons?

MARTIN.

Both very agreeable; the young lady's prudence and modesty seem equal to her wit and beauty, of both which she has a great share. Besides, she is of a great family.

HEARTLY.

'Odsbud! if we could but make them fall in love with each other

BETTY.

That is ready done to your hands.

HEARTLY.

You do not tell me so?

BETTY.

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B E T T Y.

Martin and I have just been witnesses to such a scene! — They are both in despair at the obstacles which stand in the way of their mutual happiness.

H E A R T L Y.

You delight me with this information, and a pleasant thought has struck me, that may, perhaps, have its effect. But I must crave your assistance.

B E T T Y and M A R T I N.

With all our hearts.

H E A R T L Y.

Could not I get a sight of the young folks?

B E T T Y.

Hold, here comes the young man, in the very nick of time. Martin, go and post yourself so as no one may come to surprise us.

H E A R T L Y.

A good thought.

M A R T I N.

I am gone.

[Exit Martin.

S C E N E III.

Enter the C H E V A L I E R.

B E T T Y.

What, Chevalier! returned already?

C H E V A L I E R.

Yes! your mistress has informed me of the whole affair, in a few words, and sent me back here again with a charge of secrecy. But what do I see? 'Zounds! I am discovered.

B E T T Y.

Discover'd! By whom?

C H E V A L I E R.

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CHEVALIER.

That man there knows me.

BETTY.

Who? mr. Heartly?

CHEVALIER.

The same; he is an intimate friend of my father's.

BETTY.

Nay, I can't help that; but after all, it will be so much the better for you.

CHEVALIER.

I should rather think so much the worse.

BETTY.

May be so, but I know the contrary.

HEARTLY.

Ah! my dear Chevalier, is it you? Whom are you seeking here?

BETTY.

He comes to see his aunt, sir.

CHEVALIER. [To Betty.]

'Sdeath, what are you saying? you'll ruin all!

BETTY.

Lord! I know what I am about.

HEARTLY.

His aunt? Is your aunt in this house, pray?

CHEVALIER.

Yes, sir,—I am here to— [In confusion.]

HEARTLY.

But, Chevalier, I am much mistaken, or your aunt lives in the country with your father, and consequently cannot be in Paris.

BETTE.

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B E T T Y.

Nay, as you please for that; but this gentleman has an aunt in this house, and an aunt who is one of your best friends.

C H E V A L I E R.

'Zounds! is the wench going to betray us?

B E T T Y.

Never fear, I am serving you.

H E A R T L Y.

It is Araminta, I suppose?

B E T T Y.

The very same.

H E A R T L Y. [*Laughing.*]

Ha! ha! ha! admirable! Oh, this is beyond every thing! So, Chevalier, you are the person who is going to marry the lady of this mansion?

C H E V A L I E R.

The lady is going to marry me, if you please, fit. But I find you are in the secret.

H E A R T L Y.

Yes, yes, I am in the secret, I know all. Ha! ha! ha! but how in the name of wonder, could a young, sprightly, agreeable fellow as you are, ever bring himself to think of so ridiculous a union?

C H E V A L I E R.

Auri sacra fames, you know, mr. Heartly.

H E A R T L Y.

I can never suffer this: I have too great a friendship for your father, to see his son——

C H E V A L I E R.

Nay, pr'ythee, either let Araminta make my fortune, or make it yourself.

H E A R T L Y.

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H E A R T L Y.

With all my heart, provided you will do as I would have you.

C H E V A L I E R.

Oh, upon my soul I am at your command, or at the command of any one, who will free me from my present wretched situation. You may judge how great must be my distress, when it obliges me to marry an old madwoman.

H E A R T L Y.

Come, come, you shall not marry her, Chevalier, if you will follow my advice.

C H E V A L I E R.

With all my heart; I put myself under your direction.

H E A R T L Y.

You shall lose nothing by it, I assure you. You are the son of a man of family, who has done me the most essential services, which it is my duty to acknowledge; an opportunity now offers of doing it, and I accept it with pleasure. However, you must assist me with your discretion: continue still to dissemble here, and hide your passion for the niece, till a proper time to declare it.

C H E V A L I E R.

What——do you know ——

H E A R T L Y.

Yes, I know all that has passed, and am sincerely rejoic'd at it; but we must not be seen together; go to my house and wait for me. I will from this instant set to work to compleat your happiness, and will soon inform you of what I have done, and what it is necessary for you to do, to second my endeavours.

B E T T Y.

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BETTY.

I will go to my mistress, and you will always find me ready to obey your orders.

[*Exeunt Chevalier and Betty, severally.*]

S C E N E IV.

HEARTLY. [*Solus.*]

Methinks I have engaged myself in this affair rather too hastily, and my generosity is going to carry me too great lengths. But no matter. How can I better employ a fortune, the fourth part of which is more than sufficient to maintain me splendidly? what more noble action can I do, than reward indigent merit, and acquit myself of a debt of gratitude towards a benefactor; to whom I owe almost the whole of what I possess? All this is very true. But let me ask my heart, whether this very noble and generous behaviour is not tinged with a small spice of malice and resentment? Am not I piqued against my old friend the colonel, for his coolness to me? and against Araminta, for her contempt of me? Am I not heartily pleased to find an opportunity of giving my revenge the reins, and offering a sacrifice to my self-love, which is still as strong as ever, notwithstanding I myself am in the decline of life? In short, friend Heartly, all this is but too true: But supposing it is? Were all mankind to examine strictly into the motives of their actions, I fancy they would find the best of them not very unexceptionable. So I'll examine no longer, but pursue the plan I have laid down. If it meets with the success which I hope for, I shall procure myself a threefold pleasure at once; namely, revenge, amusement, and doing a good action. Objects too inviting to resist, and therefore I shall give myself up to them without reserve. But here comes George.

S C E N E

S C E N E V.

Enter the COLONEL.

HEARTLY.

Well, my good friend! How fare your loves?

COLONEL.

Loves! What loves?

HEARTLY.

Why, what loves do you think I mean? —
Your's and Isabella's?

COLONEL.

Mine and Isabella's? Hum! so, so.

HEARTLY.

That is what I think. I see no preparations
making for the happy day.

COLONEL.

No, no, I do not intend there shall be any
noise or fuss at my wedding: do you take me for
a fool?

HEARTLY.

Heaven forbid! I know you are wisdom itself.

COLONEL.

Could you suppose I should be coxcomb enough
to invite a whole train of brothers, sisters, uncles,
aunts, cousins, cousin-germans, and all the rest of
the impertinent tribe that assemble on such occa-
sions? Not I truly——I'll have none of your
dancing and fiddling, to stun my own brain, and
disturb the whole neighbourhood.

HEARTLY.

Oh, I know you are too prudent for that; but I
thought the presence of an intimate friend, like me,
would

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would be agreeable to you ; and that my advice on certain heads would be very acceptable.

COLONEL.

Look you, mr. Heartly, I am greatly obliged to you, and all that ; but at present I do not stand in need of any advice——my resolution is taken——and so I should esteem it a very great favour, if you would leave me to myself. I shall be glad to see you some time next week.

HEARTLY.

How ! next week ? Why, do you imagine I can live so long without seeing you ? I perceive you have something that sits uneasy upon you, George, and this determines me to serve you to the——

COLONEL.

'Zounds, sir ! I am not uneasy——I was never more easy in all my life——I——I want none of your services, I tell you. Nothing can be so troublesome, as people who will make themselves necessary whether one will or not.

HEARTLY.

How, colonel ? I did not expect a behaviour of this kind, I must confess——But I pity you——poor man !

COLONEL.

Poor man ! 'Sdeath ! what d'ye mean by that ?

HEARTLY.

Nothing. I'll take my leave of you for the present. But I have one favour to ask of you.

COLONEL.

What is that ?

HEARTLY.

As I have an affection for every thing that belongs to you, and I am informed that your niece is in this house, be so kind to procure me the honour of paying my respects to her.

COLONEL.

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COLONEL.

Oh, you may pay your respects another time.
Fare you well.

HEARTLY.

A second affront ! I now disclaim all friendship and connection with you ; and if I should take a proper revenge for the insult you have offered me, you have yourself only to blame. Your servant,
[Exit Heartly.]

S C E N E VI.

COLONEL. [Sole.]

Was there ever such a man ? If I had not taken all the necessary precautions to conceal my design, I should have imagined that he had discovered it. But I am to attribute every thing he said to the warmth of his friendship. Pox take him, and his friendship too ! he has so confused me, I do not know whether I stand upon my head, or upon my heels. 'Odso, while I am in this ill humour, I'll go and find out my old mistress, make her heartily dislike me, and, if possible, prevail on her to conceal our engagements. I know I shall have a great difficulty to persuade her to this, for she loves me to distraction. Heaven inspire me with means to make her hate me !
[Exit Colonel.]

END of the FOURTH ACT.

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ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

The COLONEL and MARTIN, meeting.

COLONEL.

SO, fir, where have you been? I have been hunting after you these two hours.

MARTIN.

Been, fir?—Sir, I have been—I have been at my lawyer's fir—

COLONEL.

At your lawyer's! What, have you a lawyer?

MARTIN.

Why not, fir?

COLONEL.

And pray what have you been doing these?

MARTIN.

Sir, I have been-executing some money deeds.

COLONEL.

What the devil does the fellow mean?

MARTIN.

Why, you must know I had a little money left me lately, and I have been buying an annuity with it.

COLONEL.

Very well, but let us have done with thy affairs, and come to mine. Is Araminta come home yet?

MARTIN.

MARTIN.

Yes, sir, and has brought her nephew with her. Upon my soul he is a strapping young fellow.

COLONEL.

Well, and what did she say to you?

MARTIN.

Not a syllable, sir; she seem'd wholly taken up with her relation.

COLONEL.

So much the better. You think then that she does not suspect any thing.

MARTIN.

Nothing in nature, sir.

COLONEL.

Well, upon my soul that is pleasant enough! Because I pretended to have a cough, she thought I was in a galloping consumption. She gives into all the stories I tell her, with the credulity of an infant, and is not the least displeased at my bringing this beautiful sham niece into the house; nay, she has even consented, that she shall live under the same roof with me; and what is more, has taken her under her care. Well, Martin, what think you of all this? I must own I cannot help laughing at it most heartily; ha! ha! ha!

MARTIN.

Nor I; ha! ha! ha! — But pray, sir, do you not feel some little qualms of conscience for thus abusing the lady's simplicity?

COLONEL.

Hum! — Why yes — I cannot but say I am sorry for her.

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MARTIN.

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MARTIN.

It grieves me to the heart. You must know, sir, that every thing which is contrary to integrity and good faith, hurts me prodigiouſly—and between you and I, it muſt be confeſſed, that your honour is at leaſt as weak as Araminta's underſtanding.

COLONEL.

'Sdeath, no moralizing ſit. Love kicks honour out of doors.

MARTIN.

'May be ſo:—but when do you marry this charming niece?

COLONEL.

As ſoon as ever I can. I am making all the neceſſary preparations for it underhand. The articles are ready; but before I dare ſign them, I muſt contrive ſome means to make Araminta return me the promiſe of marriage I gave her; and then———what a happy fellow ſhall I be.

MARTIN.

But here comes your lovely niece.

S C E N E II.

Enter ANGELICA.

COLONEL.

Yes, poor thing, ſhe is come to look for me.

MARTIN.

Moſt certainly. You are the delight of the whole ſex.

ANGELICA.

I came, ſir, to ſee if you was here; my aunt and I have been greatly ſurpriz'd at being in your houſe ſo long, without ſeeing any thing of you.

COLONEL.

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COLONEL.

Forgive me, fair creature; the impatience I feel to make you mine, is the reason of this seeming want of respect. I have been these two hours with my lawyer, settling the marriage articles, with which, I assure you, you will have no reason to be displeased.

ANGELICA.

Sir, I believe your intentions are very good.

COLONEL.

By heavens they are.

ANGELICA.

But I much question whether they will have any effect.

COLONEL.

Why so, my charmer?

ANGELICA.

Because I am the cause of your proving unfaithful to your first engagements. According to what Martin has imparted to me, by your directions, in order to prevail on me to observe the secrecy you desire, I find that I am destined to fill the place of a person whom you have loved for many years.

COLONEL.

Why, that is the very reason that I do not love her any longer.

ANGELICA.

But allowing that your passion for the lady may be cooled, sir, yet your breach of faith is not the less blameable, and I cannot but feel some scruples at being the cause of it.

COLONEL.

You are the innocent cause, and I take all the fault upon myself. Ask Martin here, if any one can have reason to reproach you?

L 3.

MARTIN.

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MARTIN.

'Psha! I say reproach too! [*Aside to Angelica.*] Insist upon your scruples.

ANGELICA.

My aunt, who is not very old, often tells me, that in her youthful days, lovers preferred death to infidelity.

MARTIN.

Lord! how times change! and now, miss, a man or a woman had rather commit a thousand infidelities, than put a restraint upon themselves for one quarter of an hour. Contrary is a ridiculous thing now a-days.

COLONEL.

Very true, Martin. [*Aside to Angelica.*] He is a lad of admirable understanding.

ANGELICA.

Ridiculous as you may please to make it, I shall always pique myself upon that qualification.

COLONEL.

Will you then be always constant to me?

ANGELICA.

Yes, if I once promise it.

COLONEL.

If you promise it! Are you doubtful then whether you will or not?

ANGELICA.

Very doubtful, I assure you, since I hear you have been promised to another.

COLONEL.

But the person to whom I was promised, has given her consent to my breaking my engagement.

ANGELICA.

THE DOUBLE INFIDELITY. 247

ANGELICA.

She has given her consent?

MARTIN.

Yes, that she has, very sincerely. Oh, I promise you she would be very sorry my master should be confined by any such old-fashioned principles as those you have been mentioning. [*Aside to Angelica.*] Answer quickly.

ANGELICA.

If the lady is so complying, sir, what reason is there for making such a mystery of our marriage, and for me to pass for your niece?

COLONEL. [*Musing.*]

The reason—Oh! the reason is, because I would not have her suspect, that I break off through any motives of inconstancy; as that might offend her and overturn my measures.

ANGELICA.

So then you are deceiving her all this while?

COLONEL. [*Half angrily.*]

'Sdeath, what unreasonable questions you ask? Deceive her? no—yes, I do deceive her—that is, I do not absolutely deceive her—for look'e, my dear Angelica—in the main, d'ye see—we are agreed as to the form—so then—you understand me—she and I—we reserve to ourselves—Come, come, you are too scrupulous, too scrupulous, a great deal.

MARTIN.

Oh! it is abominable! Upon my word, miss, this is too much. [*Aside to Angelica.*] Courage, you have confounded him

COLONEL.

What are you whispering there?

L. 4.

MARTIN.

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MARTIN.

I am lessening her a little, sir, on your account.

COLONEL.

It is very well done. [*To Angelica.*] You cannot deny, that if—— Martin, help me out.

MARTIN.

No, miss, I think you cannot deny that if——

COLONEL.

Do not interrupt me. I say you cannot deny, that if I deceive Araminta, it is entirely out of love to you, and that the basest action is sanctified by so fair a cause.

ANGELICA.

You are very obliging, sir, but this complaisance will not overcome my scruples.

COLONEL.

'Psha ! 'pscha ! leave scruples to groveling minds.

ANGELICA.

And will you take upon yourself all the evil that I may be the cause of in marrying you ?

COLONEL.

Yes, my charmer, I'll take the whole upon myself, and save your delicacy. [*Aside.*] To what lengths does passion hurry us, when it gets the upperhand.

ANGELICA.

This promise has given me confidence, and since you persist in your intentions, I will no longer make any objections.

COLONEL.

Divine Angelica !

SCENE

S C E N E III.

Enter BETTY.

BETTY.

My mistress, sir, has sent me to tell you, that her nephew is just arrived, and desires to know if you are at leisure to receive his compliments.

COLONEL.

With all my heart——— Tell him I wait with impatience to bid him welcome. [*Exit Betty.*] They say he is a very agreeable well bred young man.

MARTIN.

I dare say you will be pleased with him.

COLONEL.

Araminta has given me so advantageous a character of him, that I long to see him.

MARTIN.

I fancy it would not be amiss to introduce him to this young lady; she will be charmed with his acquaintance, and he with hers.

ANGELICA.

I have no objections.

COLONEL.

Well, well, time enough for that.

S C E N E IV.

Enter ARAMINTA, the CHEVALIER, and BETTY.

ARAMINTA. [*To the Chevalier, entering.*]

Pray sir come in. [*To the Colonel.*] Sir, give me leave to present this gentleman, my nephew, to you.

COLONEL.

Madam, you do me a great deal of honour. Upon my word he is a very agreeable genteel young man.

CHEVALIER.

Sir, I kiss your hand.

COLONEL.

And I your's sir. [*To Araminta.*] Permit me also, madam, to present this young lady, my niece, to your notice.

ARAMINTA.

A most amiable young lady, indeed, colonel!

ANGELICA.

You are very obliging, madam.

COLONEL.

She longs to embrace you, madam, do her that honour if you please.

ARAMINTA. [*Agrihly.*]

It is doing myself a sensible pleasure, sir.

COLONEL.

She will henceforward look upon herself as under your direction, as you have been so kind to promise me that you would favour her with your advice.

ANGELICA.

ANGELICA.

Which it shall be my study to observe, madam; and hope to merit the additional favour of your friendship.

COLONEL.

Most discreetly spoken. I must embrace you my dear niece, to shew how much I am pleased with—
[Offering to kiss her, she pushes him away.]

ANGELICA.

Sir! Uncle! I beg you will excuse me.

COLONEL.

Lord! child, there is no harm——

ANGELICA.

Sir, once more I desire to be excused.

ARAMINTA.

You are very scrupulous, miss! I suppose you would be offended if I was to embrace my nephew.

COLONEL.

It is owing to her youth and inexperience.—— Will you permit me, madam, to present these few bank-bills to this young gentleman; they will serve to defray his private expences, while at Paris.

ARAMINTA.

Sir, this is extremely generous; I accept your offer with all my heart, but in return, you must give me leave to present this young lady with a few jewels, which will become her better than they will me at present; and I really long for an opportunity—but the fear of offending.

ANGELICA.

Madam, this goodness quite confounds me. I cannot, upon my word——

COLONEL.

COLONEL.

Take them, Angelica, or the lady will be angry—
 —[*Aside to Araminta.*] I long to have an opportunity of speaking a word or two to you in private.

ARAMINTA. [*Aside to the Colonel.*]

I was just going to propose the same thing to you—Betty, shew this young lady the apartment which is provided for her.

[*Exeunt Angelica and Betty.*]

CHEVALIER.

And, with your leave, aunt, I'll go and take possession of mine.

ARAMINTA.

With all my heart, nephew. Martin shall shew you the way. Martin, it is the same that your master used to occupy.

MARTIN.

Oh, I know them, madam, perfectly well. Come, sir, follow me.

CHEVALIER.

Shew the way. [*Exeunt Chevalier and Martin.*]

ARAMINTA.

Well now, all disguise or complaisance apart, between you and I, how do you like my nephew?

COLONEL.

Upon my word and honour, I think him as agreeable a young fellow, as I ever saw.

ARAMINTA.

You make me happy. But does he really please you?

COLONEL.

Exceedingly. And my niece, what do you think of her? Speak sincerely, and do not disguise your sentiments.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

I assure you I am charmed with her. She is handsome, well-bred, has a genteel air; and, I believe, a great deal of wit and understanding.

COLONEL.

No one can have more. The longer you know her, the more you will admire her. I find it is so with me.

ARAMINTA.

I do not wonder at it.

COLONEL.

Nor I, that you have so great a regard for your nephew.

ARAMINTA.

How can I avoid it?

COLONEL.

Impossible. Well, after all, there is something enchanting in youth.

ARAMINTA.

Exquisitely so: something so amusing, so pleasing.

COLONEL.

Yes; and it gives one such spirits, and — and — Do you know, now, whenever my niece is present, I feel as if I was not above twenty years old.

ARAMINTA.

Surprising! And, when I see my nephew, I am as gay, and as light-hearted, as if I was in my hanging-sleeve coats. In short, I think of nothing, nobody, but him.

COLONEL.

Lack-a-day! just so it is with me, in regard to Angelica — I am thinking we cannot do a better action, than to settle what we have upon them after our deaths.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA:

Nothing can be more reasonable.

COLONEL.

And, indeed, more just.

ARAMINTA:

And generous——But, now, with regard to our marriage?

COLONEL.

Why,—as to our marriage—it will be some time or another.

ARAMINTA:

The later, the better, I think.

COLONEL.

Nay, for that matter, if it should never be——

ARAMINTA:

We are no longer young.

COLONEL.

Nor agreeable.

ARAMINTA:

The fire of love languishes between us.

COLONEL.

It is expiring——Marriage would completely quench it.

ARAMINTA:

And then we should grow cool.

COLONEL.

And then, perhaps, dislike each other.

ARAMINTA:

What a dreadful situation! I tremble at the thoughts of it.

COLONEL.

Then,—why should we resolve to make each other miserable?

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

Why indeed! Are we not at liberty to act as we please?

COLONEL.

True; but, if we were once marry'd, adieu to freedom on each side. Oh! marriage is a dreadful business.

ARAMINTA.

I must own it frightens me.

COLONEL.

Well then, do not let us marry.

ARAMINTA.

What vexes me is—that we have entered into mutual engagements you know.

COLONEL.

Engagements! Why, do we not see those broken every day? It is the fashion now to change.

ARAMINTA.

And a very pleasing fashion it is. Lord! if one was never to change, life would be insupportable.

COLONEL.

People would hang themselves, [*Feeling in his pockets, and pulling out a paper.*] Let me see.—If I am not mistaken, this is the promise of marriage you gave me.

ARAMINTA.

It is; I know it again. And, I believe, this is your's. [*Showing another paper.*]

COLONEL.

The same. Well, what shall we do with this paper lumber?

ARAMINTA.

Nay.—Why.—I don't know.—what you will.

COLONEL.

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COLONEL. [*Holding the paper as if going to tear it, and smiling.*]

Well then.

ARAMINTA. [*Smiling.*]

And well then.

COLONEL. [*Beginning to tear it.*]

Do you see what I am doing?

ARAMINTA. [*Doing the same with her paper.*]

Very plainly—And do you see what I am doing?

COLONEL.

Courage.

ARAMINTA.

Tear away.

COLONEL.

I do.

ARAMINTA.

And so do I.

COLONEL. [*Tearing it to pieces.*]

There!——it is done.

ARAMINTA. [*Doing the same.*]

It is finished.

COLONEL.

Now my heart is at ease.

ARAMINTA.

And mine is as light as a feather.

COLONEL.

However, you know it will be necessary to save appearances as much as possible; and carry it to the world as if we were still of the same mind.

ARAMINTA.

Nay, if you will, we'll spread a report that we are actually marry'd. Let the world believe it—And it may happen, for all this, you know.

COLONEL.

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COLONEL.

There are many unaccountable things happen in this world—But now let us part. Adieu, my dear friend.

ARAMINTA.

Farewell, my dear friend; for now we have no other ties, but those of friendship, to bind us.

COLONEL.

True. And you are at liberty to marry any other person, whenever you please.

ARAMINTA.

Who, I? No! I shall die a maid.

COLONEL.

And I, a batchelor—That is fixed—[*Afide.*] Now for my sweet Angelica. Once more, adieu, my dear friend. [Exit Colonel.]

ARAMINTA.

Thank heaven I am at length free; but I shall not long remain so: there are other engagements preparing for me: and such engagements! Oh! I shall swim in pleasure. The thoughts of it almost turn my poor brain.

S C E N E VI.

Enter BETTY.

BETTY.

Bless us, madam! How pleas'd you appear! O my conscience, I believe you was going to dance.

ARAMINTA.

Oh! I ride upon the wings of joy.

BETTY.

And, pray, what may have occasioned these sudden transports?

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

Every thing is broken, dissolved, annulled, obliterated, girl! Happy moment! I am now mistress of my own actions.

BETTY.

So! now we shall have fine doings!

ARAMINTA.

My old lover and I have just had an explanation. We have taken an exact survey of the state of our sentiments for each other; and have, at length, agreed in the most friendly manner in the world, that we have no longer the least inclination for one another.

BETTY.

I understand you! Your loves were so old and tattered, that they would hold together no longer: is it not so?

ARAMINTA.

Yes, child! Our love appeared to be quite tottering and falling to pieces.

BETTY.

Methinks I perceive some of the ruins scattered here. [*Pointing to the torn pieces of paper on the stage.*]

ARAMINTA.

You are right! These are the only remains of our former engagements.

BETTY.

Bless me! I had almost forgot! Mr. Heartly is in the drawing-room, waiting to speak with you.

ARAMINTA.

That man was born to be my plague! What can he want with me?

BETTY.

Here he comes to inform you.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

And, with him, my quondam lover. Retire.

SCENE VII.

Enter COLONEL *and* HEARTLY.

COLONEL.

I know it very well, mr. Heartly; you are certainly an old and faithful friend; but still you oblige me to tell you, once more, that the greatest proof I desire of your friendship is, that you will never, for the future, trouble yourself about my affairs.

HEARTLY.

There are certain occasions, my dear colonel; wherein we ought to make it our duty to serve our friends, even in spite of themselves; and I am resolved to convince you, this day, that no one takes so strong an interest, in what concerns the happiness of you and this lady, as myself, however you may please to despise my friendship.

COLONEL.

'Sdeath! I have told you, over and over, that I want none of your friendship.

ARAMINTA.

And I have told him the same. But, pray, what may be the matter of debate between you two?

COLONEL.

Why, this gentleman insists upon giving us a proof of his regard, by pressing us to conclude our marriage this very night.

ARAMINTA.

Mr. Heartly, sir, will you give me leave to say one thing to you as a friend?

HEARTLY.

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HEARTLY.

Whatever you are pleased to say, madam, I shall listen with all due attention.

ARAMINTA.

Why then, my dear sir, you have, for these twenty years past, taken a great deal of pains to make yourself perfectly burthen some to me.

HEARTLY.

I am obliged to you, madam, for so kind a declaration. It is no more than what I have supposed for a long time.

ARAMINTA.

Then, pray, do me the favour now, once for all, to take your final leave of me.

HEARTLY.

That favour, madam, I shall grant you very quickly. But yet, hear what I have to say to you both. Remember the solemn promise you have made each other; and think of no other thing. This is the most pressing.

COLONEL.

There, mr. Heartly, you are greatly mistaken; it is not the most pressing.

ARAMINTA.

Surely, sir, the colonel and I are the best judges of what is the most pressing.

HEARTLY.

Then, to come to a conclusion, madam, as your friend and relation, I cannot approve of your deferring the fulfilling your engagements any longer. All the world is acquainted with them, and every one knows there is nothing to obstruct them, and your reputation is at stake, if you continue any longer to hesitate.

COLONEL.

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COLONEL.

The world knows! A fig for the world. We are accountable to none but ourselves; and we shall act in the manner we think the most suitable.

HEARTLY.

And these are both your sentiments?

COLONEL, and ARAMINTA.

They are.

HEARTLY.

Well, then, I must serve you whether you will or not; and I am possessed of infallible means to make you both hearken to reason——

ARAMINTA.

I defy you.

HEARTLY.

You defy me! Nay, then——walk in, mr. Voluble.

S C E N E VIII.

Enter VOLUBLE, with a bundle of paper under his arm.

COLONEL.

What the devil brings this original here?

VOLUBLE.

Madam, and gentlemen, your most obedient, most devoted, most obliged, and very humble servant.——How?

COLONEL.

What's your business here?

VOLUBLE.

My business here, sir! upon my word a very pretty question to me, your old acquaintance, whom, without vanity, it is sufficient to know
and

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and esteem ; to me, who am the darling of all the great, the noble, the illustrious, and distinguished personages of both sexes in this opulent, vast, and extensive metropolis Hem !

COLONEL.

So, so ; I find you are the same as ever.

VOLUBLE.

Yes, colonel, as you see ; toujours gai, lively, sprightly and alert.

COLONEL.

Well, but pray good mr. Alert what business brings you here at this time ?

VOLUBLE.

A business that will put you in a good humour again ; I have here a contract of marriage to be signed ; where are the parties ?

ARAMINTA.

What does the man mean ?

VOLUBLE.

They say the bridegroom that is to be, is incomparably derusticated ; and the bride that is to be, is perfectly, supremely, and superlatively handsome.—Hem !

COLONEL.

What is all this stuff ?

VOLUBLE.

Stuff, sir ! stuff ! Let me tell you, sir, there never was any stuff, either in my pleadings or deeds. Here is one now, which I drew up myself ; and for precision, perspicuity, eloquence, diction, and all that, I think I may defy all my brethren of the long robe. I hate a multitude of words ; give me the pithy, the warm, the persuading, the sublime, the energetic, the——

COLONEL.

COLONEL.

Heark'e, master Voluble, my patience is almost exhausted : so come to the point ; what business brings you here ?

VOLUBLE.

I have here articles of marriage between the chevalier Brilliant, and miss Angelica Sprightly, [*To Heartly.*] Did not you tell me, fir, that the young couple that are to be, held their place of residence in this house ?

HEARTLY.

That is to say, for the time being.

VOLUBLE. [*To the Colonel.*] !

You see, fir, I am not come with false pretences and tokens. No, no ; let little Voluble alone : faith I always act with a circumspection that is perfect, supreme, and superlative in its kind.

COLONEL.

My good master Voluble, let me tell you you are most perfectly, most supremely, and most superlatively foolish.

VOLUBLE.

Foolish ! Why where's the folly of bringing marriage deeds to sign ?

ARAMINTA.

Marriage deeds ! what marriage deeds ?

VOLUBLE.

Between Angelica Sprightly *aforesaid*, on the one part ; and the chevalier Brilliant on the other part, to wit.

COLONEL.

Pray who informed you they were going to be married to each other ?

VOLUBLE.

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VOLUME. [*Bowing to Hearty.*]

That gentleman.

COLONEL. [*To Hearty.*]

Did you tell him this?

HEARTLY.

I did.

ARAMINTA.

And upon what foundation, pray?

HEARTLY.

On a knowledge of their mutual inclination; the desire they have to be united for life; and the promises they made each other in my presence.

ARAMINTA.

My nephew?

COLONEL.

My niece?

HEARTLY.

Yes, your nephew and your niece; they love each other passionately; they made me their confidant; and it is I who give them to each other.

COLONEL.

I am thunderstruck!

ARAMINTA.

I am confounded.

S C E N E IX.

Enter CODICIL and PUZZLE.

VOLUME.

Oh ho! here are two of my brethren; mr. Codicil, your most devoted; mr. Puzzle your most obedient humble servant.

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA.

What do I see !

COLONEL.

What is the meaning of all this !

VOLUBLE.

Gentlemen ; pray gentlemen, may I, with all due deference and respect, entreat to know the occasion of your coming hither ? Hem !

CODICIL.

Sir, I bring a contract of marriage between colonel Campaign and miss Sprightly.

PUZZLE.

And I another between this lady here present and the chevalier Brilliant.

COLONEL.

How is this, madam ? Was you going to marry your nephew ?

ARAMINTA.

Why not, pray ? You was going to marry your niece.

COLONEL.

'Tis mighty well, madam ; I am glad I have discovered your little plots.

ARAMINTA.

And I, that I have found out your's, sir.

VOLUBLE.

I protest this is tit for tat. This adventure is perfectly, supremely, and superlatively pleasant.

COLONEL. [*To Codicil.*]

And pray who told you to bring this contract here ?

CODICIL. [*Pointing to Hearty.*]

That gentleman.

M

ARAMINTA.

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ARAMINTA. [To Puzzle.]

And you, sir; who desired you to attend!

P U Z Z L E.

That gentleman. [Pointing to Heartly.]

C O L O N E L.

That gentleman! that gentleman! Every thing is done by that gentleman! The devil take that gentleman. Pray, sir, how come you so mighty well acquainted with all our secrets?

H E A R T L Y.

From yourself. This nephew and niece, whom you introduced to one another, first gave me a suspicion of your intentions. I then went to these gentlemen, the lawyers, and told them that I was entrusted with the secret; they believed me upon my bare word, and thereupon each opened his budget, and thus I was let into the whole mystery. It was at my desire they came hither; as I told them that you had no longer any reasons for keeping your marriage a secret.

ARAMINTA.

Upon my word, you have put a fine trick upon us, mr. Heartly.

H E A R T L Y.

It is the trick of a friend, and saves you from committing the most extravagant folly that you could have been guilty of.

V O L U B L E.

Upon my word, that is superlatively true.

H E A R T L Y.

When the rage of disappointment is over, you will thank me for it. And now take my advice, reflect coolly; the least noise of this in the world would

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would render you both the objects of public derision. Now think what you have to do;

S C E N E X.

Enter the CHEVALIER *and* ANGELICA.

ARAMINTA. [*To the Chevalier.*]

Ah! perfidious wretch! Art thou there?

COLONEL. [*To Angelica.*]

Ah! traitress! is it thee?

CHEVALIER.

Madam; — aunt; — I really ask your pardon.
But——

ANGELICA.

Uncle; — I, — I, I assure you, — I am so confounded!——

ARAMINTA.

And have I bestowed all my jewels upon my rival?

COLONEL.

And have I made a present of my bank notes to the man who has robbed me of my mistress?

ANGELICA. [*To Araminta.*]

No, madam; that would not be just. Therefore please to accept your casket again.

CHEVALIER. [*To the Colonel.*]

And here, sir, are your bank notes.

COLONEL.

Well, if they are not faithful, they are at least honest. But why have you thus deceived us? Why did you consent to marry us?

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H E A R T L Y.

Thro' necessity. Youth and beauty will not do alone, without the goods of fortune to support them.

C O L O N E L.

But will they be any richer by marrying each other? Who will give you a fortune?

CHEVALIER and ANGELICA. [*Pointing to Heartwell.*]
That gentleman.

C O L O N E L.

Why, that gentleman is still the factotum, I find.

S C E N E the Last.

Enter Q U I R K.

V O L U B L E.

As I live I believe here is another of my worthy brethren, honest Mr. Quirk, upon my veracity. One would think this was a call of sergeants.

C O L O N E L.

What the devil! another lawyer! what is your business here, pray?

Q U I R K. [*Going.*]

You see here the two persons who desired me to come; they would not be marry'd without the consent of their master and mistress, and I am here in the name of the betrothed, to entreat the honour of the last named parties, to set their hands as witnesses to their contract of marriage.

C O L O N E L.

How! Martin and Betty going to be marry'd?

A R A M I N T A.

Pray who is to give you a portion?

B E T T Y.

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BETTY, and MARTIN. [*Pointing to HEARTLY.*]

That gentleman.

COLONEL. [*To Heartly.*]

Upon my soul, mr. Heartly, you dispatch a great deal of business in a very little time.

MARTIN. [*To Heartly.*]

Sir, you will be pleased to sign first; for it is to you we owe the little we are worth.

HEARTLY.

May I take the liberty to know how much that little is which I have bestowed on you?

QUIRK.

By these articles, it is stipulated, that mr. Martin Ramble, brings with him, as a marriage portion, from Charles Heartly, esquire, the sum of two hundred and fifty pounds.

HEARTLY.

Two hundred and fifty pounds?

MARTIN.

A mere trifle! you see, sir, I have been very modest.

QUIRK.

And in the said articles, he acknowledges to have received of mrs. Elizabeth Pindress, as a marriage portion, the like sum of two hundred and fifty pounds.

HEARTLY.

Upon my word you have carved very sufficiently for yourselves: however I will sign it.

VOLUBLE. [*To Araminta and the Colonel.*]

And now, sir, and madam, to make an end, as the vulgar saying is. Here is the minute of
your

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your contract, which I have kept by me these five and twenty years, till it is almost as threadbare as your affection for each other. Now, permit me to speak to you, with truth, sincerity, openness, frankness, and without ambiguity or circumlocution. You cannot do better than set your hands to this contract, without hesitation or difficulty. Hem!

H E A R T L Y.

A thousand considerations concur to oblige you to this resolution. You have both of you wandered from the paths of reason, turn into the right road once more, and request of these gentlemen to keep this affair a secret. As to myself, I promise upon my word and honour, that it shall never escape my lips, provided you will follow the friendly and salutary advice I now give you.

C O L O N E L. [To Araminta.]

Well, what say you to this?

A R A M I N T A.

Nay, just what you will.

H E A R T L Y.

You cannot reproach each other, having been both equally to blame. So courage, and join at once in making a proper determination.

C O L O N E L.

Agreed.

A R A M I N T A.

I yield.

H E A R T L Y.

But this is not all. Add generosity to prudence. Let my conduct be your example. You have loved these young people, and yet you have taken back the present you made them. Can you find in your hearts to keep those baubles?

A R A M I N T A.

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ARAMINTA. [*Taking the bank notes from the Colonel.*]

There, Chevalier, take these in remembrance of your once affectionate Araminta.

CHEVALIER. [*Kissing her hand.*]

You shall ever be my honoured aunt.

COLONEL. [*Taking the casket from Araminta.*]

There, hussy, keep these jewels for love of me.

ANGELICA.

I cheerfully obey my dear uncle's commands.

HEARTLY.

And now let us sign the old and the new articles.

PUZZLE.

But pray good folks, what is to become of our's?

COLONEL.

Oh! we make you a present of them.

CODICIL.

And who is to pay us for them?

COLONEL. [*Pointing to Heartly.*]

That Gentleman.

OMNES.

Ha! ha! ha!

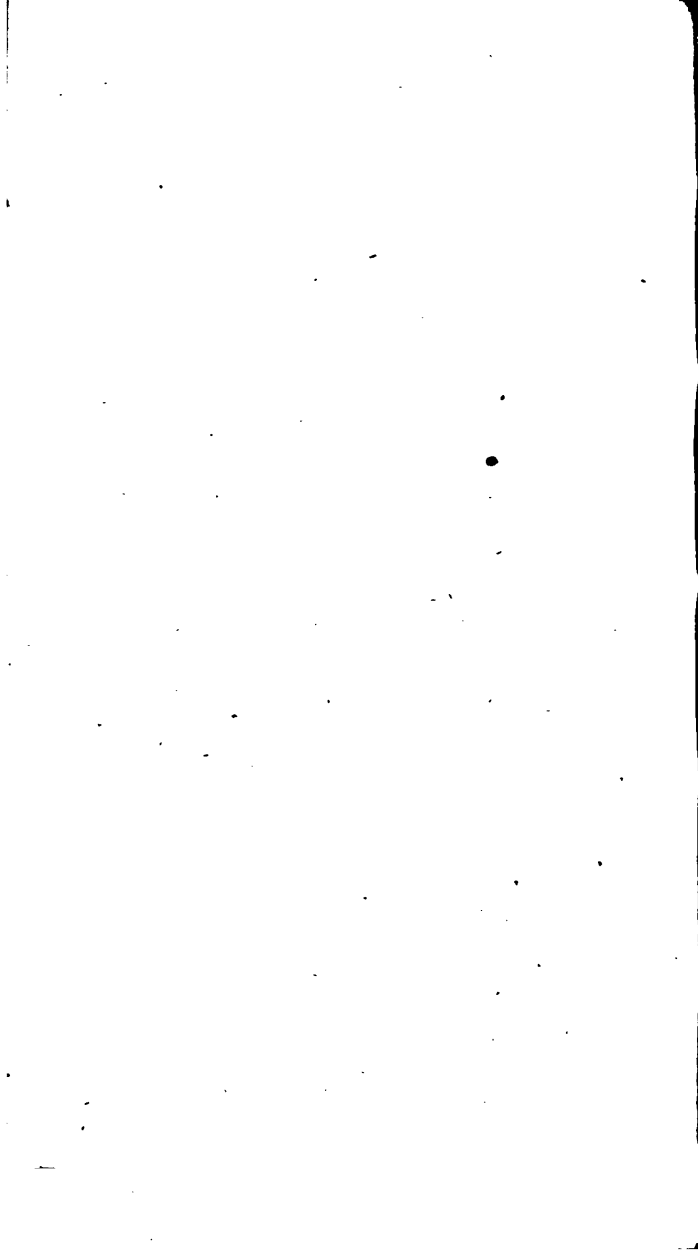
HEARTLY.

With all my heart, and would to heaven I was possessed of a fortune sufficient to make all mankind happy and reasonable.

END of the WHIMSICAL LOVERS.







~~714~~ APR 11

